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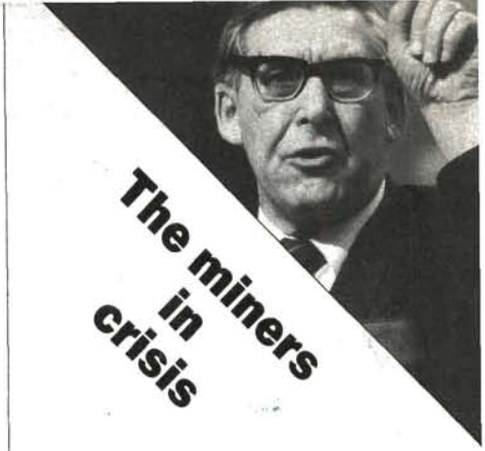

The miners in crisis

Will you, won't you, will you, won't you join

THE DANCE

The Superpowers come to grips with defence

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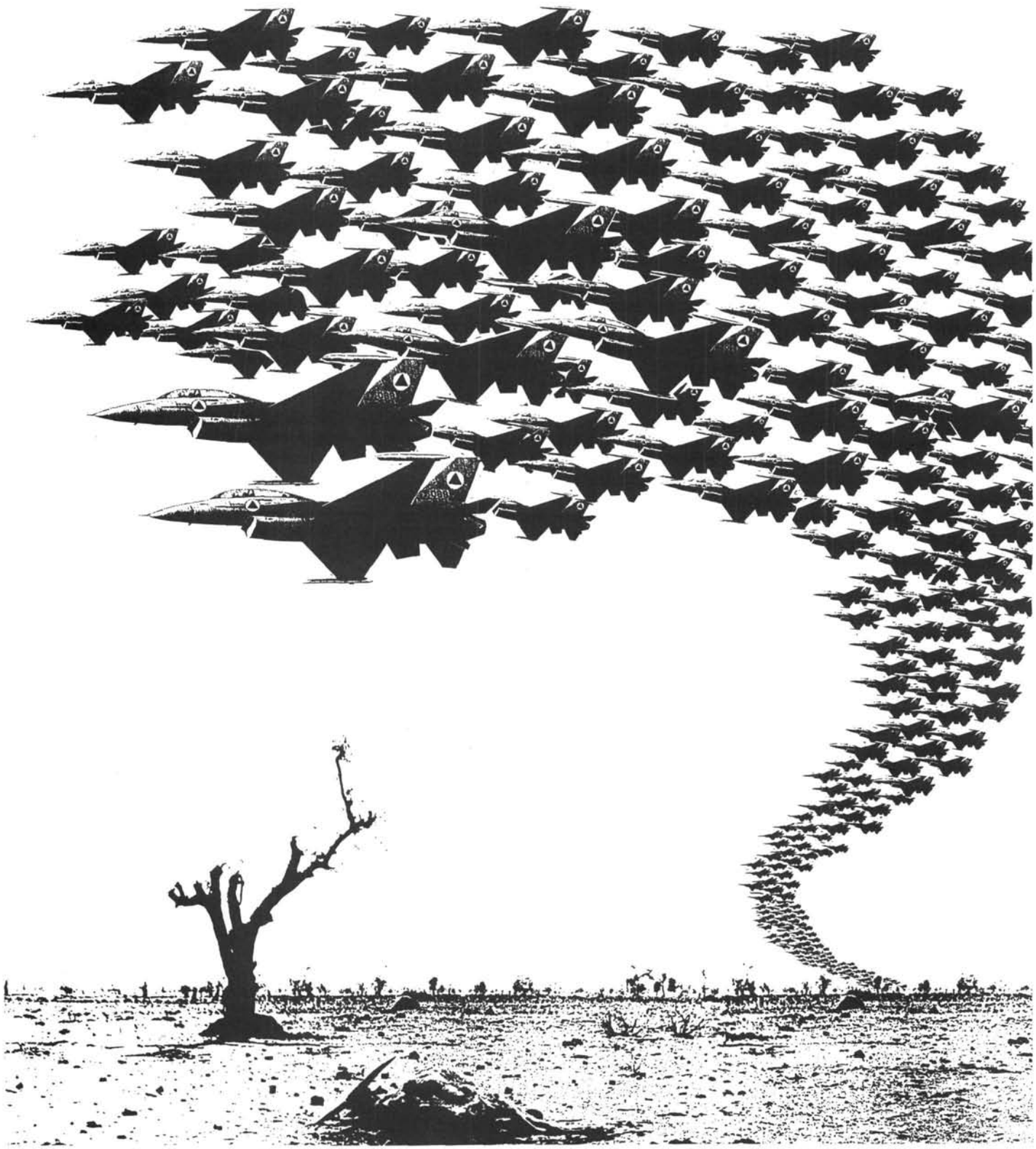

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NEW STATESMAN

Vol 113 No 2923 3 April 1987

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NEXT WEEK

Sarah Benton on the leading ladies of the SDP; the first complete guide to getting rid of the Government; the historians clash — Dai Smith, Bevan's next biographer, takes issue with John Campbell, his most recent one

Ready for testing

MIKHAIL Gorbachev has a point. Unemployment is a denial of human freedom.

It cannot be set beside his own regime's continued denial of elementary human rights to dissidents and religious minorities. It is not equivalent in moral or human terms to imprisonment for beliefs, or for exercising free speech, as he sought to make it in his speech in the Prime Minister's presence at a Moscow banquet on Monday. His cautious liberalisation scratches the surface of a society whose contours and reflexes were moulded in terror. But if Mrs Thatcher believes that *her* assertion of these truths exonerates her from *his* charge, she is mistaken.

She, too, can claim she is scratching the surface. But the downturn in the unemployment figures, hopelessly cooked over the past seven years, is late, depends almost wholly on special measures and looks as much a piece of electioneering as her Moscow walkabout. It has been easy to forget, in the pre-election fever and the orchestrated rubbishing of Neil Kinnock's visit to Washington (see Alastair Campbell's vivid report on that on p.20), that unemployment remains her colossal failure, the darkest and best reason why her government must be deprived of a third term of office. She has presided over a huge surge of human misery.

Remember the facts. Unemployment was at 1.14m in 1979, or 4.3 per cent of the labour force: at the end of last year, it was nearly 3.2m, or 11 per cent. The male rate, 5 per cent in 1979, is now around 13 per cent: of that latter figure, 41 per cent have been out of work for more than one year (25 per cent in 1979).

The crude unemployment totals do not sum up the problem. There are at least two 'lost generations': the 20-plus year olds, too old to have been caught in the rudimentary training programme safety nets, and now forming a large component of the long-term unemployed; and the 55 or even 50-plus year olds, encouraged or told to go early, eking out a life in which they could still contribute much. Both groups are overwhelmingly composed of skilled and unskilled workers no longer needed, and with the lowest of hopes of getting employment.

And conservatism isn't working. The central mechanism for restoring full employment has been an insistence that, as labour market rigidities and pay were lowered, people would 'price themselves back into jobs'. Now, with the unions weakened, living standards at the lower end of the market much lower relatively than they were seven years ago, the wages councils' protection removed for most workers and for all young workers, the privatisation of services in local government and the national health service playing their malign part in forcing down the wages of the already poor — even now, the breakthrough to lower levels of unemployment has not come.

We do not hear the 'pricing back into jobs' nostrum so much as we did, but we do not hear anything else, either. Since employers have not played their allotted role, in taking on more cheap workers terrified of unemployment — but instead insist that they must pay reasonable rates for skills, especially in internationally competitive sectors — there is no other lever to pull except the creation of more schemes in which to put the jobless masses. Below the exhortations from Cabinet ministers you can detect the cynical calculation that, since the majority have never had it so good, the minority can go vote for Neil Kinnock. Who needs them?

It is a measure of the seriousness of both Labour and the Alliance that they continue to address this question, submerged as it has now become, with vigour and energy. Labour's newest document, *Work to Win*, launched earlier this week, repeats a now familiar message: a pledge to reduce unemployment by 1m over two years, coupled to a five-year programme of investment in research, development, education and manufacturing capacity. The unemployed are the living testimony of the need for it: that of the dead is to be found in the skeletal landscapes of Merseyside, Clydeside, Tyneside and the West Midlands. Already, the National Economic Development Office has speculated that Britain may be heading for a status midway between a developed and a developing country — once the oil runs out. A programme of the kind proposed by Labour this week needs to be in place before it does.

As both Neil Kinnock and Norman Willis, the TUC general secretary, made clear, there is no going back to the ultimately failed corporatism of the 1970s. Kinnock recognised, significantly and explicitly, the disciplining feature of the marketplace: 'If people want security in their occupations and a regular income they will understand that "rogue elephant" deals either cannot be paid or will end in defeat.' Norman Willis reflected, sombrely, that 'I believe that because we have had a long hard lesson — not only a long hard winter once and some damn long hard years since — then the issues of pay, productivity, exports, costs and jobs are certainly linked in people's minds much more closely together.'

That is the maturity of hardship, the realism of adversity. They have been gained at some cost to illusion: they are now ready to be tested. □

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BROADWATER FARM DIARY

Life on the Broadwater Farm is back to normal: as normal as it can be. We've had to learn to live through the tension and survive. Buying a house somewhere and moving away hasn't been an option so instead we're building the place up into something we can be proud of. Take a look at what's going on here. Last week our co-op set 24 young people up in proper full-time jobs. It took them 2½ years to fend off the MSC because the young people didn't want to be given a bite of the cherry then thrown back onto the scrapheap. We have a day care centre for 25 under-fives and a mother's project run by women on the estate.

○

The building it's in used to be a youth hostel for teenagers picked up by the police. Now we're bringing kids down from the tower blocks and giving them proper places to play and some hope for a job. A drop in the ocean, we know — there's need for many more day-care places and jobs, but we prefer to work now to prevent those kids getting into trouble later. We're running our own launderette, fruit and vegetable shop and youth association. and we have regular meetings where everyone reports what's going on here on the Farm — and that includes the police.

○

The small amount of faith people here had left in the system has been shattered — not just by the trial, but by the way the police went about picking up suspects. Many families had their homes raided, doors sledge-hammered in and items taken, yet no forensic evidence was produced. We still believed, though, that once they were brought before a judge and jury justice would be done. It's not enough to convict someone simply because a crime was committed: it has to be the right person.

○

This is terribly painful for us now, but if the appeal fails, then a precedent has been set which threatens us all, black and white. If the police know they can pick up someone and on the basis of an unsigned statement — no forensic evidence, no witnesses, no photos — they can get a conviction, they are going to think they are the Untouchables. If this police investigation is not challenged then the solicitors of this land are all under suspicion. The police will have established that they are justified in keeping solicitors from their clients for two or three days of interrogation in case solicitors warn other suspects of what might be in store.

○

When the media reports on the Farm it focuses on fear. People who identify with crime prevention — with protecting the old from the young, the very young from the old, women from men — argue for fortified doors, more lighting, more police, more dogs. Of course some of those things are needed. But to have community safety you need co-existence. At one stage tension was so high the old people who'd lived here for years were terrified when they saw a black face. So even behind their fortified doors, with their guard dogs, they had to take tablets to sleep at night. You don't get rid of those fears by saying forget about it — or saying we're all human beings when we weren't being treated as such. You build an atmosphere of co-existence and that takes time.

○

Today on Broadwater Farm people don't die in their tower blocks with no one knowing for days. The young here know now that a well-balanced meal in the community centre is better for old people than a plastic meal on wheels. That means encouraging them down to the centre. They know the place is isolated and that means borrowing a car and getting shopping in for the old folks. Similarly with young women and children, cut off in the tower blocks. If you come and pick up your kids from the day-care centre and I pick up mine, we talk to each other. So while it's nice to have more street lighting, the only thing that takes away the fear is knowing your neighbours are going to look after you.

○

On Tuesday I went to the Broadwater Farm panel: the crime statistics for February showed no robberies, two burglaries, three car-related crimes; the police say that's very low. When they came round here to set up a Neighbourhood Watch scheme people told them — no thanks, we don't need it, we have very little crime. And yet a month ago Commissioner Newman spoke to the Society of Conservative Lawyers in the House of Commons and said half the population here were criminals and the police can't come in. It made headlines but his own officers admitted to us he's out of date. Things have changed, and they haven't just changed since the riot. We've been working to lift demoralisation here since 1980.

○

Often I don't open my mail in the morning. I put off doing it all day because I don't want to be too upset to get on with everything that needs to be done. And I carry it around with me — I don't want my kids being burdened with all the hate that's in it. But I can't protect them from the phone calls and sometimes the phone rings through the night. It's the same for everyone on the Farm who is involved, who's had their name in the papers. Whenever something hits the headlines, the phone calls and hate mail start. For the media, a story may be 'too good to check' and it may sell papers. For us it's the start of weeks of evil, racist abuse.

○

Clearly, though, there is hope: not everyone believes everything they read in the tabloids. I was elected to Haringey council in last May's election. The Tories were sure they were going to get in because there was a big hype campaign: remember the riot, remember Broadwater Farm. Labour won an even bigger majority than before. People voted who hadn't done so previously. Now we need a voter registration campaign to encourage people round here to use their votes.

○

When I first came to this country in 1963 I was looking for a bigger place — we were living in one room. The notices announced 'no niggers, no Irish'. What did we have in common, I wondered? Now the same police methods used in Northern Ireland have been used against us. After the riot we made links with the miners. It's sad that it takes being hit by a police truncheon to bring people together. Everyone has a little cosy patch which enables us to read the paper and say — hippy convoy, printers, gays and lesbians, nothing to do with me. Maybe the miners felt before the strike that they were protected as white people. But not having a job, going through the courts, being in the hands of the police — these things make us realise what we have in common.

Martha Osamor

Martha Osamor is councillor for Bruce Grove, Haringey and is active in Broadwater Farm Defence Committee and Youth Association.

ROGER WODDIS

The Flogging of Reading Gaol

Douglas Hurd, the Home Secretary, is considering the possibility of including a programme of private prisons in the Conservative manifesto for the general election.

In Reading gaol by Reading town
  There is a crowded cell,
And meeting in a Mayfair suite
  There is a small cartel
That hopes to serve the government
  By doing rather well.

There never was a group that looked
  With such a wistful eye
On pickings to be made from crime,
  With figures running high
And fifty thousand prisoners
  They cannot wait to buy.

They know not whether this be right,
  Or whether that be wrong;
All that they hope who build a gaol
  Is that the years be long;
And that the clang of prison doors
  Will prove the sweetest song.

For all men sell the thing they love,
  And profit is preferred
To setting forth a moral lead
  For thousands doing bird;
Such is the thought that beautifies
  The soul of Douglas Hurd.

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The party of Wales?

SUPPORT for Plaid Cymru, the 'Party of Wales', has dropped in the polls to around 6 per cent of the Welsh electorate. If this level of support is maintained at the next general election then the party may return only one Member of Parliament — Dafydd Wigley in Arfon. Outside Gwynedd, it will have ceased to be an effective political force; reduced to a rump in the South Wales Valleys, to which it has paid so much attention, and on which it has placed so much hope.

The national movement which the former president of Plaid, Gwynfor Evans, once forecast could not be stopped, appears in its death throes. A remarkable turn around from the heady days of the late '60s and early '70s, when in by-elections at Camarthen, Caerphilly, Rhondda and Merthyr, Plaid registered swings of 30 per cent and shook the Labour establishment to its foundations.

Confusions and contradictions in ideology and strategy have played their part in the reverses: the party is divided between left wingers, espousing an ill-defined 'decentralist socialism', and 'traditionalists' who disagree on constitutional objectives and the political priority to accord the Welsh language.

The worldwide economic depression has also worked to undermine Plaid: who now believes that economic separatism is either possible or attractive? The party's slogan of the mid-'70s 'Rich Wales or Poor Britain?' — is seldom heard these days.

The emergence of other non-Labour political forces with strong Welsh support has also worked against Plaid. Plaid's general election vote peaked in 1970 at 11 per cent, before the Liberal revival, the surge in support for the Tories in Wales under Thatcher's leadership (the swing to the Tories in Wales in 1979 was among the highest in Britain), and the birth of the SDP. The by-ways of Welsh anti-labourism are now cluttered with respectable alternatives to Plaid Cymru, whereas in the late '60s the party was the only opposition force many parts of Wales had seen in a generation.

A paradoxical reason for decline is the relative success of the nationalist cultural programme. Welsh is, to quote, Dafydd Ellis Thomas MP, current president of Plaid, the most heavily subsidised minority culture in the world. The absence of cultural oppression within the liberal multi-national British state — indeed its unrivalled generosity to the Welsh language — has undoubtedly sapped the political wing of the nationalist movement of considerable vitality and personnel, who've left active politics to pursue their careers in the cultural industries spawned by state-sponsored Welsh nationalism.

The fundamental issue, though, is the continuing political and cultural identification of the Welsh with the rest of the UK. There *are* differences: but they don't seem to amount to much.

The Valleys' air may once have been thick with sociologists and ethnographers peddling Plaid Cymru's growth as an expression of our 'rediscovered ethnicity', but the truth was always much more prosaic. The Nationalists' successes were built on the failures of and disappointments with Labour in office, locally and nationally. Harold Wilson was the father of modern Welsh nationalist politics: the travails of British social democracy the soil in which it, a regional variant of the 'de-alignment', grew. Yesterday's nationalist rebels are today's Welsh quiz show hosts, presenting programmes for Valleys' children who have learnt Welsh and who will vote Labour. The same polls which give Plaid 6 per cent give Labour 50 per cent: which is the party of Wales?

Tim Williams

Powder kegs

THE BRITISH prison population is about to break through the 50,000 barrier, following a surge of imprisonments in the first quarter of this year. The conditions which produced the wave of riots in May last year will get worse, in spite of a £1bn of capital investment and starting pay for prison officers at £15,000 a year.

The government is building new prison places fast, doubling the programme since 1983 and setting a target of 17,000 extra places by the early 1990s. But these extra places will at best maintain the existing levels of crowding which result in 18,000 prisoners sharing single cells.

Letting prisoners out will be difficult for a government which has done little to provide aftercare for prisoners. Front bench spokesperson on home affairs Clive Soley wrote last week to Home Secretary Douglas Hurd to ask him to lift the freeze on grants to new aftercare hostels run by voluntary organisations, imposed in April 1985. Soley quotes the Association of Chief Probation Officers' estimate that some 1,500 places are needed to meet demand — other estimates put the demand at double that.

Says Soley: 'It's a false economy. Hostels play a crucial role in resettling prisoners on parole. At the moment, prisoners can't be paroled because hostel places are not available. Instead, minor offenders are filling overcrowded prison cells'.

Andrew Rutherford, chairman of the Howard League for Penal Reform, says: 'At some point the dimensions of the penal crisis will dictate that the Home Secretary take on the judiciary. By this is not meant any interference with the essential independence of individual sentencing decisions. But it does not mean grasping the nettle of sentencing reform. The Home Office must take the lead in legislating a coherent sentencing framework that places tight restraints on the use of custody, at both the remand and sentencing states.' ●

Prison Populations and Rates

(per 100,000 inhabitants for Council of Europe members Feb 1986)

	Total prison pop.	*Prison pop. rate per 100,000*
Austria	8,286	109
Belgium	6,373	64
Cyprus	171	32
Denmark	3,513	69
France	45,754	81
Federal Republic of Germany	56,285	92
Greece	3,584	37
Ireland	1,852	52
Iceland	88	36
Italy	43,855	77
Luxembourg	344	91
Malta	90	27
Netherlands	5,133	35
Norway	2,121	51
Portugal	9,493	96
Spain	23,550	61
Sweden	4,649	56
Switzerland	4,600	71
Turkey	67,416	130
U.K.	53,127	94
England & Wales	45,622	92
Scotland	5,568	109
Northern Ireland	1,937	125

Source: Council of Europe, Prison Information Bulletin June 1986, p.27

This dangerous nonsense

THERE'S ONLY one thing wrong with last week's Health Education Council report showing that the health gap between rich and poor has widened under the Conservatives. It isn't true.

It may seem strange that a left-wing magazine should doubt a report which seems to expose the government's record. But the Health Education Council's report, *The Health Divide*, uses sloppy methods to back up easy anti-Tory assumptions — in a way that could be dangerous to the idea of a National Health Service.

The Health Divide was David Player's parting raspberry to a government which abolished his Health Education Council. It updates the Black Report, commissioned by the last Labour government, which found that the gap between the health of different social classes was widening; using the latest figures for 1983 and 1984, *The Health Divide* purports to show that inequalities in health have continued to increase under the Conservative government.

The furore over the government's attempt to stifle publication of *The Health Divide* — which parallelled Tory health minister Patrick Jenkin's embarrassment over the publication of the Black Report in 1980 — distracted attention from the genuine problems with the Black Report's approach.

The committee chaired by Sir Douglas Black showed that the health gap between the top two

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social classes and the bottom two had widened since the 1950s. The simplest indicator is death rates, but its findings held good for most indicators of health or ill-health. In 1949-53, for example, men in social classes 4 and 5 (semi- and unskilled manual workers) were 1.2 times more likely to die than those in classes 1 and 2 (professional and managerial). In 1970-72, they were 1.5 times more likely to die than upper class men. *The Health Divide* last week suggested that this gap had widened further by 1979-83.

But there are two simple explanations for this apparent widening divide. One is that the figures are for men aged 15 to 64, because social class is defined by your job. As the average age of men at death is now over 71, comparing deaths before the age of 65 gives a distorted picture. If we add in the three-quarters of deaths that occur after the age of 64, defining social class on the basis of the last job, the gap between classes is much narrower. (The reason the Black Committee didn't do this is because pensioners' reporting of their last job can be inaccurate.)

The other reason is that the manual working class has been shrinking. Semi- and unskilled workers now make up less than a quarter of the population, where in 1951 they accounted for a third; similarly the professional and managerial classes have expanded from 15.5 per cent to over 24 per cent. The Black Report and *The Health Divide* are not therefore comparing like with like, as there is evidence that ill-health is now more concentrated among a smaller manual working class.

Last month Julian Le Grand, a health economist at the London School of Economics, published figures which overcome these two problems. He analysed the ages at which people died in England and Wales in various years, and measured how unequal or 'dispersed' they were. No matter how he measured inequality, he found that ages at death have become gradually less dispersed since 1921, and even showed a slight narrowing between 1981 and 1983, the latest two dates available. Adjustments for population changes caused by, for example, the two world wars and baby booms didn't affect the findings.[1]

Le Grand's research does not *show that the Thatcher government is responsible for equalising the health-chances of the British people. It does show the momentous achievement of the National Health Service in improving and equalising health since the second world war. Another of his studies shows that in 1982, Britain had a more equal spread of ages at death than any other country apart from Sweden, the Netherlands, Eire and East Germany, which had similar distributions and which are smaller countries.*[2]

It is also true, though, that the tripling of unemployment since 1979, and the doubling of the numbers of those living on or below the Supplementary Benefit level, have an effect in the opposite direction. Several studies have proved beyond doubt that there is a link between unemployment and ill-health. *The Health Divide* quotes gruesome research findings that men out of work for over a year are 19 times more likely to attempt suicide than those in work.

But the danger in *The Health Divide*'s approach is that it doesn't try to separate out the beneficial effects of a long-term socialist health policy from the deplorable effects of mass unemployment and widening earnings differentials induced by Conservative policy since 1979. As far as we can tell from the information available, the beneficial, equalising effects — so far — outweigh the deplorable, disequalising effects. This may not last, and the urgency of getting rid of the Conservative government is undiminished. But the case should not be argued on a distorted social class analysis which can be used to undermine support for the National Health Service.

John Rentoul

1. Raymond Illsley and Julian Le Grand, *Measurement of Inequality in Health*, London School of Economics, February 1987. 2. Julian Le Grand, 'Inequality in Health: Some International Comparisons', London School of Economics paper, September 1986.

If the caption fits

No 11

We know we made you do a caption for Ms T last week, but none of your entries have yet found their way to our new address (it's inside the back cover, and no, it's not a slogan, it's our address). So here she is again, *en route* to Moscow. Words or thoughts for her, or Frank Mitterrand, or both, to reach us by Tuesday 14 April; the winners of the £10 book token to appear in the issue dated 17 April.

No 9: winner

Lawson senior: 'Some day, my dear, 27 per cent of all this will be yours.' (*Noel Petty, Stockton-on-Tees.*) Hon. Mensh for: 'This little piggy went to the open market.' (*Alfred Parker, Hitchin.*)

NEWSTATESPERSON

Willy's last role

DESPITE SCORES of newspaper obituaries, the longest lasting career of 20th century social democracy is not quite over. Willy Brandt started and finished on the left of the Social Democratic Party of Germany, rejecting the SPD's cautious leadership in the 1930s and reaching out to the Greens in the 1980s. His leaving of the party leadership, like his leaving of the West German chancellorship in 1974, had dark elements of bizarre personal misjudgments allied to a tangible *schadenfreude* — pleasure in the discomfort of others — on the part of the German establishment, including, let it be said, many of the SPD.

Brandt was the most unGerman of politicians. The stern Prussian SDP softened under his grip. The much misunderstood Bad Godesburg revision widened the party's reach without losing its central socialist core — indeed later critics would say that the SDP remained too much a party centred on the priorities of the industrial working class.

With his *ostpolitik* Brandt undid 20 years of West German cold war diplomacy and European politics has never been quite the same. But in recent years perhaps Brandt's most interesting achievement, and one that few have remarked upon, has been his presidency of the Socialist International. Largely moribund when he took it over in 1974, the SI under Brandt's leadership has become a significant international force. It organised massive support for Spanish and Portuguese democratic socialism and provided an important international platform for Greek socialists. The SI and Brandt reached out to Latin America giving politicians like Peru's Alan Garcia and Costa Rica's Luis Monge international prestige and articulating a world alternative to Manichean pro-American or pro-Soviet politics.

If the ideas of a Euro-left sponsored by Peter Glotz, Frances Morrell and the Italian communists are ever to leave the pages of left journals and become institutional reality then the SI should play a much greater role. As he quits German politics will this be Brandt's last great task? According to the SI's general secretary Brandt will remain as president at least until the SI congress in 1989.

This will spoil plans of the French socialists reported to be seeking a takeover of the SI in order to 'Latinise' and pry it from the grips of northern, mainly German and Swedish, social democracy, which has dominated the SI since 1945.

Britain's Labour Party, despite the SI's office in London, played a relatively minor role, reflecting Wilson's and Callaghan's distrust of non-English speaking foreigners while the present leadership has been discomfited by the fact that the French, German, Italian and Spanish party leaderships do not fully endorse Labour's wish to see France the only European country with nuclear forces.

Brandt, as the Labour Party conference noted last autumn, speaks fluent English (how many Labour politicians could return the compliment?). Freed from German duties and in his last period of active political life at the head of the SI Labour should consider inviting him to spend more time in Britain to see if some of his style, stature and experience could be transferred. ●

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PETER KELLNER

Suppose Neil Kinnock made it to Number Ten — just

A TYPESETTING error made nonsense of the concluding paragraph of last week's column. It should have said that this week's column would be about Neil Kinnock's options if he had to form a *minority* government. Here goes.

The first point ought to be the most obvious, but seems to elude those who talk as if a 'hung Parliament' is a single concept. It depends on the precise distribution of seats in the Commons. Neil Kinnock could lead any one of three distinct kinds of minority government. Each may be illustrated by an example:

1. Labour 320 searts, Conservatives 270, Alliance 37, others (Welsh and Scottish nationalists and Ulster MPs) 23. Labour would be six seats short of an overall majority, but it could outvote the combined forces of the Conservatives and the Alliance.
2. Labour 310 seats, Conservatives 285, Alliance 32, others 23. Labour is the largest party, but now *cannot* outvote the Tories plus the Alliance.
3. Labour 295 seats, Conservatives 300, Alliance 32, others 23. In some ways this presents the most intriguing scenario of all. Unless Mrs Thatcher (or some swiftly-chosen successor) managed to make a deal with the Alliance, the Tories would be unable to continue governing. If they tried, their Queen's Speech would probably be opposed by both Labour and the Alliance and would therefore be defeated. The Queen would then be bound to ask Mr Kinnock to form a government.

In all three cases, Mr Kinnock's strongest card would be his power of dissolution. Whenever his minority government were defeated in a major vote in the Commons he could go to the Queen, ask for a dissolution and secure a fresh election.

As far as it is possible to map out these uncharted waters, this power is absolute. That is, any Prime Minister coming to power from opposition is entitled to a dissolution at any time. Mrs Thatcher, on the other hand, could not force a re-run of the election if her Queen's Speech were defeated (for example, in case 3 above): she had called the election that had produced this result and had used up her entitlement for the time being to dissolve Parliament.

IN A HUNG Parliament, then, the tactical advantage lies with the party leader coming to power from opposition. If Thatcher were unable to construct a majority for her Queen's Speech, she would have to resign; if Mr Kinnock were defeated on his, he could hold a fresh election, *and fight it as the incumbent Prime Minister*.

That fact alone is likely to be enough to save Mr Kinnock from the need to conclude any formal deal with the Alliance. In hung local councils, coalition-type deals are commonplace: but they have fixed-term elections which force councillors to rub along together as best they can. The power of dissolution at Westminster means that hung Parliaments have historically produced minority governments rather than coalitions. There is no reason to expect anything different next time. (The prospects of a coalition would be greater if a second election also produced a hung Parliament; but that's another story.)

A hung Parliament would generate as many tactical worries for the Tories as for Labour. They are unlikely to want a quick second election. Either Mrs Thatcher would wish to stay on as party leader, or she would resign. Either way, the Tory party could face weeks, possibly months, of turmoil, as rival factions compete to gain the upper hand. It is unlikely that they would want to fight a second election until some semblance of unity is restored. And, if Mrs Thatcher did resign, the new leader would want time to establish his image, policies and way of running the Party.

So whatever the Alliance chooses to do, Labour should be able to rely on the Tories voting against a Kinnock government as seldom as possible and, for a few months at least, abstaining on confidence votes — just as they did in March-May 1974, even though Edward Heath's position as party leader was not under immediate threat.

> ***In a hung Parliament, the tactical advantage lies with the party leader coming to power from opposition***

In the short term, then, Mr Kinnock will have some freedom of manoeuvre. At the very least, his first hundred days are unlikely to see a second general election. He will not need to construct a coalition with the Liberal/SDP Alliance, or even something akin to the Lib-Lab pact of the Callaghan government.

The crucial question Mr Kinnock will face is not whether to form a coalition with the two Davids, but something else: should be behave as essentially a caretaker Prime Minister, directing all his efforts to the task of winning a second general election as soon as possible — or should a minority Labour government do as much as it can for as long as it can, and only go to the country again when government becomes impossible?

There are clear arguments on both sides. The case for adopting a 'caretaker' role goes like this. A minority Labour government will be unable to get any piece of truly radical legislation through Parliament. What can be done will be limited to a cautious finance bill and a handful of decisions that do not need formal Parliamentary approval. Britain needs a majority Labour government, and the sooner it gets one, the better. The longer a minority administration clings to office, the longer we have to wait for real power. Kinnock is likely to have a honeymoon with the voters after arriving at Number Ten; he should cash in on that as soon as possible.

The case for hanging on is more pragmatic. Voters don't like elections that don't need to be held, and are likely to punish any politician who provokes a second general election too early. If Labour loses an early second election, it will have achieved almost nothing. There is, anyway, quite a lot that a minority government can do. It is unlikely to be stopped from raising pensions and child benefits, or from spending more on schools and hospitals. Many people can be helped — and the longer a minority government can keep going, the more help can be given, and the greater the chances are that voters will see the benefits of Labour in office. It would be a betrayal of millions of people who have suffered under Thatcherism to risk the early return of another Conservative government and throw away the chance to carry out those things that a minority Labour government could do.

THOSE TWO strategies are posed as alternatives. In real life things will be less clear cut. But the nature of the trade-off remains; and it conceals a set of awkward questions about Labour's response to the Alliance. Even if no communication takes place between Mr Kinnock's office and those of the two Davids, the Alliance cannot be ignored, although its precise influence will depend on the Parliamentary arithmetic.

If Labour is the largest party and Mr Kinnock tries to run a minority government for more than a few months, his main tactical concern will be to prevent the Alliance combining with the Tories (and possibly with the nationalists and Ulster Unionists) to bring him down. That means steering clear of those policies that the Alliance are certain to oppose. That constraint would limit much of what Labour could do on (for example) defence and social ownership.

Alliance leaders have devoted much effort to insisting on negotiations with either or both of the main parties in the event of a hung Parliament. Mr Kinnock has adamantly maintained that there will be no negotiations. In fact, whether or not negotiations take place is beside the point. The two Davids may not appear in person to talk to Mr Kinnock, but their ghosts will be ever-present, whispering in his ear.

One of Mr Kinnock's first tactical judgments, in preparing his Queen's Speech, is whether to listen to those voices or not. If he plans to play it long, he will have to; if he is aiming for a second general election at the earliest possible date, he can ignore the Liberals and the SDP.

Whichever course Mr Kinnock adopts, he will have to make up his mind quickly — at the very latest in time to decide which of Labour's manifesto promises should be included in his Queen's Speech. Mr Kinnock's first weekend at Number Ten will be exhilarating but also very tricky. The fate, and longevity, of a minority Kinnock government will depend on the detailed results of the election that produces it — and on some difficult decisions that the Labour leader will have to face within days of coming to office. □

This article is adapted from an essay for a new Fabian Society pamphlet, Labour's first hundred days, *available from 11 Dartmouth Street, London SW1H 9BN, £2.*

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The hope of the world

The arms race is soundly based on fear. Western countries have had reason to fear the expansionist power of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union, twice invaded by Western Powers since the 1917 revolution, has a defensive psychology which lies deep. That is the dominating conflict of the world: in a host of other theatres, nations arm themselves against putative enemies with just as much justification. War has appeared — in many places, still does appear — indissoluble from the fact of nation states.

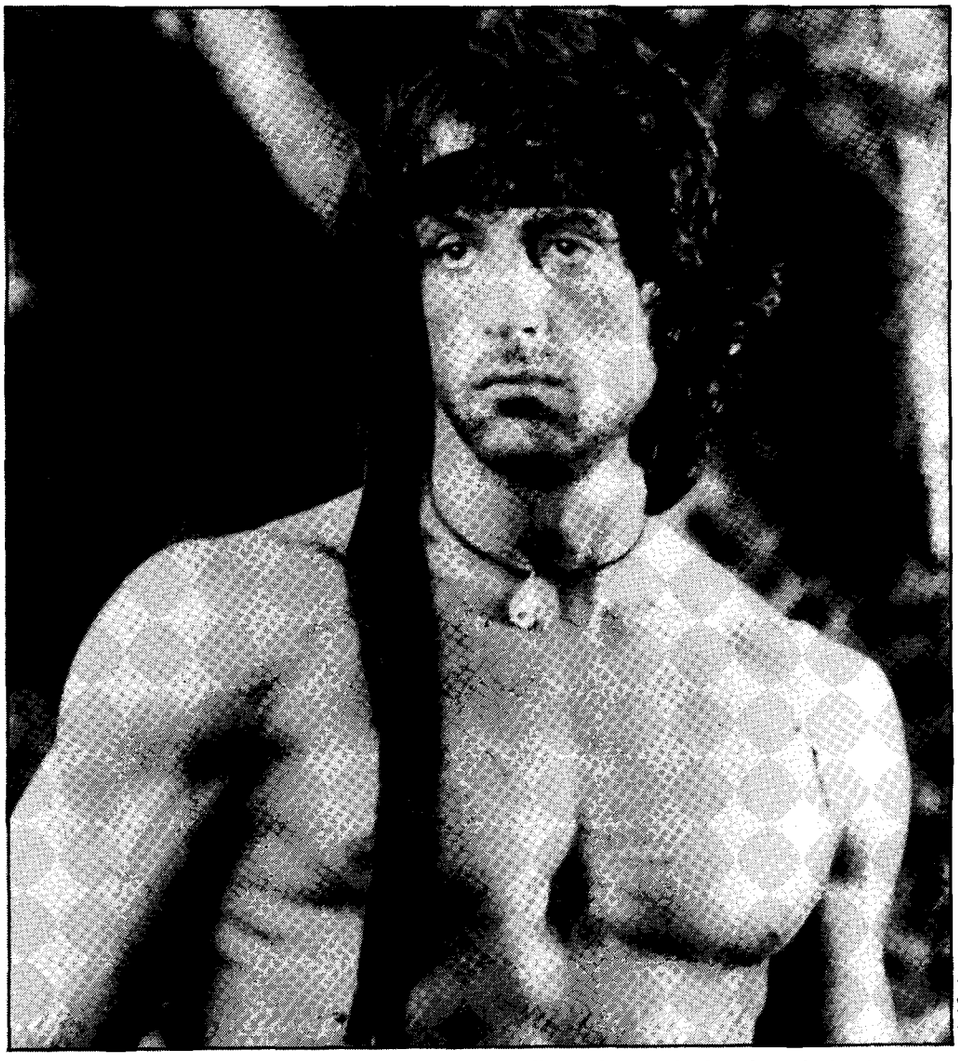
But now, the blocs of East and West may be offered something different. Largely because of a series of signals from the Soviet Union that its leadership no longer sees the world as dominated by two inevitably hostile superpowers, hope springs that a new level of understanding and trust may be gained that justifies a disarmament process.

It is against this background that the British general election will be held: an election in which each of the three main parties will be offering sharply differing defence policies. It is a good time to run a series on defence — launched last week by Denis Healey.

We continue the series in this issue by taking the temperature of the Cold War in Washington and in Moscow, with the help of two of the most experienced British correspondents in these capitals: **PETER PRINGLE** *of the* Independent *in the US and* **MARTIN WALKER** *of the* Guardian *in the Soviet Union.*

Pringle and Walker find changes of mood in both centres: a slow ending to Reaganite belligerence in the US and an emerging, popular mood for arms agreement: the faster development of a still-fragile openness to compromise in the Soviet Union, though put forward by a leader whose base is still shaky, and whose system remains dictatorial. It is a picture of what-might-be: of a better hope than we have had for a decade: but still only of hope.

In forthcoming issues we will examine the momentum of the arms race; the crises in the two main blocs; the failure of arms control; Labour's defence policy; and the problems of disarmament. The series is edited by **JANE DIBBLIN**



Kobal Collection

Sylvester Stallone's fire-power as Rambo wowed the box-office as long as the American electorate was buying Reagan's visions of real-life super fire-power. But as the doubts set in, so Stallone is having to rethink the act

US: the retreat of the blue column

Washington

THE WORD from Hollywood is that ramboism is out. Sylvester Stallone is re-writing the script of his new film in order to portray himself as a thinking person, concerned about world issues. Here in Washington, Ronald Reagan, the Rambo President, suddenly gives the appearance of being absorbed by the project of a new arms control agreement with Moscow.

It's not hard to read the smoke signs. In Stallone's case the change of heart is mainly about money. Americans are apparently fed up with unthinking patriots. The rival blood and guts film, *Platoon*, featuring a more realistic view of an infantryman's anguish in the war in Vietnam, picked up three Oscars and is leading box office receipts. In the President's case, the new turn toward peace is mainly about political survival now, and his place in the history books later.

After six years of high nationalism and widespread anti-Sovietism there is evidence that the warrior mood is changing, that there may be a break in the Cold War, that there may be a move away from isolationism and back to internationalism. Some have even been whispering it's okay to be a liberal again.

The very nature of trends is to change, and a

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shift in the wind is to be expected about now. The season is right. Ronald Reagan has entered his last two years and his Republican Party is close to panic about whether they can find a suitable replacement for him in the White House.

A leading candidate, Vice-President George Bush, is running on the Reagan ticket; that would seem to put the odds more in favour of a new arms agreement than riskier adventures such as an invasion of Nicaragua. Not only are Americans shunning Rambo films: the polls also show a majority would be against invading Nicaragua. The generals continue to be against such an intervention because, as always, they have reasonably wondered what on earth they would do when they got to Managua.

Elephants linger

And there is Iran. The scandal over arms-for-hostages is by no means over. There are still two major investigations proceeding slowly, one in Congress and one under the special prosecutor. It is not a matter of clearing up after the elephants have passed by, as the former White House Chief of Staff, Don Regan, once put it.

The Republican party leadership understood this fully when they grabbed the White House reins last month and steered the moderate, smiling Howard Baker to become the new White House Chief of Staff. When thinking about what the Reagan Administration has in store, it's important to understand the full meaning of the Baker Regency.

There's a popular notion that *before* Iran Mr Reagan was a 'hands-off' President, that his detached management style of allowing underlings a long leash permitted the Iranian shenanigans, and that his last 22 months will be 'hands on'.

The political image is wrong. He *was* a 'hands on' President before Iran. *He* ran the White House, and the way he ran it was to let others do the work. Republican leaders, fearful of a total collapse, stepped in and took Mr Reagan's hand off the wheel.

In the old 'hands on' era, not only were Iran scandal figures such as Oliver North and John Poindexter allowed to run amok, others were too. Caspar Weinbeger at the Pentagon and Bill Casey at the CIA played just as fast and loose.

It's dismal now to recall those early days when President Reagan explained Russian nuclear superiority by pointing to a chart with one tall red column and a shorter blue one. Them and us. 'There you are, that's the problem,' Mr Reagan would say, and by the time the experts pointed out the President was counting warheads instead of missiles, or vice versa, it was too late. The deception had been perpetrated. The American public began to believe sincerely in the non-existent 'window of vulnerability' and in their own inferiority.

In those times Mr Reagan, who knew nothing about nuclear missiles (and didn't want to learn) was ill-served by Weinbeger and his glossy Pentagon brochures warning of non-existent Russian military achievements. The 1982 edition of *Soviet Military Power* was unforgettable for its elaborate portrayal of a new Soviet 'anti-aircraft laser', which, as it turned out, was nothing more than an artist's impression of how such a weapon might look like if the Russians had one, which they did not (according to US intelligence).

Other deceptions followed. In Grenada, stories of a huge communist arsenal were used to support the 1983 invasion – but only a piddling cache of weapons was found. In Nicaragua, stories of squadrons of Soviet MIGs, and a 'Red Tide' sweeping up from Central America were used to justify the funding of the Contras. And, before and after the 1986 raid on Libya, the White House ran a covert disinformation campaign about Gadafy.

Little big lies

Little lies, often repeated, become big lies, and, eventually, people get fed up with being deceived. The betrayal of trust shown by Ronald Reagan in the Iran affair has prompted Americans to review the potential damage of that and the other deceptions.

In arms control, according to the polls, a majority of Americans now want to negotiate reductions of the nuclear arsenals with the Russians. This is a marked change: in 1980 and again in 1984 they elected a President who stomped the country, opposing the SALT agreements. In 1979, as President Carter was seeking ratification of SALT II, candidate Reagan was saying the agreement could 'lead to war'.

Snap-brim era of the Cold War before 'nuclear winter'. Richard Gerstell's government-sponsored *How to Survive an Atomic Bomb* (1950) advised hats for men, and stockings and long-sleeved dresses for women.

DIRECTION OF
HEAT FLASH
If you are caught outdoors in a sudden attack, a hat will give you at least some protection from the 'heat flash'.

Once elected, Reagan and his aides talked about 'winning' nuclear war and for six years there has not been a single treaty either limiting or reducing the nuclear arsenals. Instead, Reagan made the Russians a series of offers they were bound to refuse: START, which sought to reduce Soviet ICBMs while allowing US strategic modernisation, and the original 'Zero Option' which asked for the withdrawal of Soviet medium-range missiles for Americans ones not yet deployed.

Reagan's attack on the arms control regime was total. His administration poisoned the atmosphere around the idea of international agreements, and especially agreements with the Russians. The Russians were liars and cheats, the public was told. They should not be trusted. They cheated on nuclear agreements, on chemical pacts and on the strength of their conventional forces. The Russians were so bad about keeping their word, it was not even worth asking for.

The US broke out of SALT II and still appears about to abrogate the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. The Administration walked away from the Law of the Sea Treaty, declared it will no longer submit to compulsory compliance with decisions of the International Court of Justice, withdrew from UNESCO and is violating its international legal obligations under the United Nations Charter by unilaterally reducing payment of its mandatory assessment of UN expenses.

These were not isolated acts of breaking out of treaties that the Reagan Administration felt were not good for America: this was a campaign *not* to have agreements with the Russians, and, instead, to have *disagreements*.

Finally, Americans said 'No': and they did so before the Iran scandal broke. On 6 November, despite the President's last minute whistle stops, voters in mid-term elections put the Democrats back in charge of the Senate. For the first time in five and half years Americans rejected 'naked to the waist Ramboism'.

Instinctively, Madison Avenue has caught the new mood. For at least six months now advertisers have begun to shed the patriotic themes and the flag-waving jingoism of yesteryear. 'You're going to see advertising that is a little more biting, a little tougher, and a little more cynical,' says a New York copywriter.

Instinctively, too, the Republican Party leadership decided to grab the reins. The administration now employs the 'permanent campaign' method of running the government that was used before but first documented during Carter's presidency: everything is geared towards winning the next presidential election.

In the end, although the smoke signals do mark an end of an era, they also constitute a smokescreen. Washington is not on the verge of beginning a new US foreign policy. The Reagan Administration's extremism may have made Americans more tolerant of the Russians and less hysterical about the Sandinistas, and it may even have produced a political climate in which Mr Reagan can conclude a deal with the Russians on reducing medium-range nuclear weapons in Europe. But the conditions and the political will for an enduring revival of internationalism are not there.

Mr Reagan will leave an America hopelessly in debt and conscious of its own political and economic inadequacies. There is already a strong temptation to be isolationist in the face of continuing industrial challenges from abroad, in the face of a Europe increasingly sceptical of American leadership, and, perhaps, a Soviet Union continuing to implement *Glasnost* (openness). Americans may experience a rising uncertainty about their own system, their own institutions and their ideology and the uncertainty could encourage further isolationism.

On the other hand, if no separate European nuclear agreement is reached — and, despite the Administration's present optimism, there is serious doubt that the conditions of the short-range missiles and the verification measures the Americans want can be agreed to before the end of the Reagan Administration — a new administration, either Democrat or Republican, may seek to reassert American leadership by wanting comprehensive, rather than regional, agreements to limit the spread of nuclear weapons.

Already the Democratic leaders in Congress have begun voicing their opposition to the agreement separating nuclear weapons reductions in Europe from the task of reducing strategic weapons. The price Europe may pay is another period of no agreements at all.

Peter Pringle

Peter Pringle is Washington Correspondent of the Independent.

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USSR: 'too small for wars'

Moscow

IT IS possible to contruct scenarios in which a Soviet invasion of the West could become likely. A West German decision to develop a nuclear capacity might be one. But Soviet Union military doctrine these days is looking decidedly defensive.

At his last party congress, Mikhail Gorbachev startled the party faithful by mentioning the name of Leon Trotsky, but only to stress that 'we are convinced that pushing revolutions from outside and doubly so by military means, is futile and inadmissible'. If he is sincere, a basic tenet of the Cold War has collapsed. Can he be believed?

'The modern world has become much too small and fragile for wars and a policy of force,' Gorbachev went on, pushing a theme he has stressed continually over the past year at Reykjavik and the Moscow Peace Forum, and again with his decision to go ahead with a separate deal to remove medium-range missiles from Europe *without* an American agreement to halt or even control the development of SDI.

At the Moscow Peace Forum, Gorbachev claimed that a long theoretical debate had taken place within the Soviet leadership on the whole concept of war in the nuclear age. 'We came to conclusions that made us review something that once seemed axiomatic — that since Hiroshima, war has ceased to be the continuation of state policy by other means,' he said. 'This is not an isolated adjustment of position, but a new methodology for international affairs.' And he insisted that in the future 'military doctrines must be purely of a defensive nature'.

We have yet to see this reflected in the heavyweight Soviet military journals, or in the authoritative military encyclopaedia. The gospel there remains as it was when Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov wrote the entry on military strategy in volume seven, in which he declared that victory in a nuclear war remains 'an objective possibility'.

Yet if Gorbachev's military doctrine is to be the new orthodoxy, then it will involve not only the re-education of Marshal Ogarkov, but the whole Soviet officer corps. It is not only anti-Soviet neanderthals who have a right to be sceptical of Gorbachev's grandiloquence. However much Western Socialists and Liberals may warm to his insistence on 'new thinking for the nuclear age', we need rather more evidence of a change in the Kremlin's military stance than a few speeches.

To give him credit, Gorbachev keeps supplying contributory proofs. The 18-month moratorium on nuclear testing was extended three times, in spite of an American refusal to acknowledge it. The Reykjavik proposals for the dismantling of nuclear arsenals in the long term, and their halving within five years, was a very promising deal indeed.

All change

What has taken place in the Soviet Union to explain these changes? The key to it is obviously Gorbachev himself, a man of vision, political gifts and a capacity for inspirational leadership that the world has not seen for a generation. It remains a mystery how the Soviet apparat of the Brezhnev era could have produced him, but the generation that is rising to power with him and because of his personnel changes are people whose views were defined by the immobilism, the corruption and the economic stagnation of the Brezhnev years.

Brezhnev was able to finance a first-class world military machine from what is still, to a striking extent, a Third World economy, because of an intense exploitation of energy supplies, and the export of oil and gas for hard currency.

The combination of energy glut, falling world oil prices, and the increasing costs of exploiting Soviet oil and gas from ever more remote areas has changed that financial equation. At the same time, the technological revolution in military hardware means that an assembly line economy can no longer sustain a modern war machine based on computer chips. The armed forces are among the Soviet institutions most desperate to see modernisation.

Unhappy logic

What is staggering about Gorbachev's revolution is that everything is changing at the same time: cultural life, the economic system, the definition of planning, and the nature of political life. It is not unreasonable therefore, to assume that Gorbachev could be right when he says that military doctrine, and the bedrock of Soviet strategy, are also being re-assessed.

But some things are not going to change. The first is the fear of invasion. The Soviet capital has been occupied by Mongols, Poles, Lithuanians and by the French. The German invasion of 1941 still dominates the national memory. And there is growing alarm at the military potential of the West German economic superpower. The fear of war on two fronts, against China and NATO, still obsesses Soviet planners: look no further for an explanation of why 100 of those SS-20s Gorbachev has offered to pull back from Europe will be redeployed in Asia. And expect strict limits on the amount of cuts in conventional forces that the Soviet military will accept.

The second thing that is not going to change is the Soviet faith in the eventual collapse of capitalism, or as the latest edition (1986) of the Communist Party Programme puts it: 'The advance of humanity towards socialism and communism, despite all its unevenness, complexity and contradictions, is inevitable'.

But the experience of the spread of socialism to Indo-China, Central America, the Arab world and Africa has been a considerable disappointment in terms of strategic advantage — and an even greater expense. Cuba, Vietnam and Angola are costly client states of a Soviet economy that is hard-pressed to afford them.

It also led over the past 20 years to a new military budget requirement: the building of the world's second biggest surface fleet. The appointment last year of a submariner, Admiral Chernavin, to run the Soviet Navy suggests that the focus of naval investment will now shift again from above the surface to beneath it. They have to save money somewhere, given the need to finance an army big enough to fight on two fronts, plus a rocket force to match the American Star Wars programme, either by developing similar technology or building enough new ICBMs and dummy missiles to swamp the SDI defences.

That decision will be determined not in Moscow, but in Washington. The determination to go ahead with SDI seems the one firm policy still standing above the Irangate rubble. And it conceals another, longer term policy: to bully the Soviet Union with Star Wars, or to bankrupt their economy if the Soviets try to keep up in the race for domination from space.

As Gorbachev's policy of *Glasnost* (openness) starts to lift the veils that have long shrouded Kremlin policy-making, the Russians are worried that Washington these days is becoming the more mysterious capital. They simply do not know whether the Administration wants to abort the Gorbachev reform programme by forcing the pace of the arms race or by other means.

We have recently had some dark hints in that direction, with the TASS news agency claiming that the Jewish demonstrations in Moscow were plotted inside the US embassy, as a deliberate attempt to tarnish Gorbachev's liberalising image by provoking a reaction from the KGB. *Pravda* has accused the Americans of deliberately hindering Soviet attempts to withdraw from Afghanistan, and there are new fears for Eastern Europe. In Budapest in 1956, and Prague in 1968, the Soviet tanks that rolled in crushed the chances of internal Soviet reforms just as effectively as they crushed the Hungarians and Czechs.

It is not easy to change military doctrine when so many of your policy options are held hostage by others. But the belief that there is now a conventional balance in Europe, expressed most recently by Chief of Staff Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, and the offer to scrap the SS-20s, suggests that if the US remains intransigent, Moscow is hoping that a deal can be done with Western Europe.

But here lurks the Catch-22 of Soviet strategy. A Western Europe that is not stiffened by an American military presence could go one of several ways. That buzz-word of the 1970s, Finlandisation, is one uncomfortable option, but few Soviet analysts believe in it.

They see a future Western European alliance which would be backed by an Anglo-French nuclear force and they dread one that would be dominated by a newly militant West Germany. They would rather see the Americans stay. Once again, the future is a hostage to American decisions.

That is the unhappy logic that faces Gorbachev at every turn. Already running a high-risk domestic policy of reform, he dare not risk being accused of jeopardising national security. For the moment, with the military men still chastened by Afghanistan and occupying only a non-voting seat on the Politburo, there could be a window of opportunity — unless Washington is determined to slam it shut.

Martin Walker

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IT SEEMS THE BBC JUST CAN'T KEEP OUT OF THE SPOTLIGHT THESE DAYS.

The British Academy Award is based on a design by Mitzi Cunliffe.

We've certainly attracted a lot of attention over the past year. And we have to admit, some of it we could have done without. However, we've also been in the news for happier reasons.

For instance, in the last 12 months we've walked off with 142 awards for television. Culminating recently in 23 out of the 30 trophies awarded by the British Academy of Film and Television Arts.

It's good to be recognized by the people who work in television. But it's even better to be rated by those who watch it.

BBC

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The conventional balance

MOST WESTERN governments still seem reluctant to put Mr Gorbachev's apparent enthusiasm for nuclear disarmament to the test. One of the major obstacles to nuclear disarmament is the widespread belief that the Soviet Union has overwhelming superiority over NATO in conventional forces. For, if such superiority does exist, the West needs nuclear weapons, not only to deter nuclear attack, but also to defend Western Europe against Soviet conventional attack.

This argument lies at the heart of the opposition by European conservatives, and NATO military chiefs, to the 'zero option' on European medium-range missiles. In their view, NATO needs cruise and Pershing, whether or not the Soviets have any SS-20s, as part of 'flexible response' — NATO's commitment to possible first use of nuclear weapons against conventional invasion. Agreeing to the 'zero option', on this view, would set a precedent that could strengthen the case of those pressing for a policy of 'No First Use' and a negotiated European nuclear weapon-free zone.

The facts

Does the Warsaw Pact have a massive advantage in conventional forces vis-a-vis NATO? Would NATO really need to cripple its members' economies in order to pay for a viable conventional defence? The answer to both questions is no.

There are too many imponderables to predict the outcome of a hypothetical conventional war in Europe. A conventional defence of Western Europe would not, however, be hopeless. NATO as a whole, after all, has a population of 638 million, compared to the Warsaw Pact's 393 million. Our combined national output is around three times that of the Soviet bloc. And our industries, particularly in areas crucial to the military such as computers and telecommunications, are acknowledged to be well ahead technologically.

Spending

The US Congressional Research Service, using US government figures, estimates that NATO now outspends the Warsaw Pact by around 25 per cent. The independent Stockholm International Peace Research Institute calculates that the gap is much wider, with the NATO military budget now about twice as great as that of the Warsaw Pact, suggesting Western advantage.

Most important is not how much is spent, but what is obtained for that spending. In some areas the Soviet bloc has a considerable numerical advantage. But in others NATO is well ahead. Overall the picture is one of rough parity or indeed of NATO advantage.

Ships

NATO has 2½ times as many major surface ships as the Warsaw Pact. This superiority has increased in recent years as a result of the top priority given to the US Navy in President Reagan's rearmament programme.

As a consequence, it is widely recognised that the Soviets plan to use most of their naval forces simply to protect their missile submarines in their 'sanctuaries' in the Barents Sea and the Seas of Japan and Okhotsk.

They simply do not have the forces available to launch a major campaign against Western shipping lanes without leaving these sanctuaries dangerously exposed.

Soldiers

According to the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), NATO has slightly more ground forces — 3 million soldiers in place plus 5.4 million reserves — than the Warsaw Pact, which has 2.8 million soldiers in place plus 5.1 million reserves.

In the event of conflict, some of these forces would, at least initially, be far from Europe. To predict the course of a battle in Europe we need to look at forces actually in place. IISS figures show that NATO has 803,000 soldiers in place in West Germany, Belgium and Holland, together with 246,000 soldiers in France, facing 998,000 Warsaw Pact soldiers in East Germany, Czechoslavakia and Poland. The precise 'balance of forces' in Central Europe thus depends on whether or not one assumes France should be counted. If France *is* included, NATO has a 1.06:1 advantage. Without France, the Warsaw pact is ahead by 1.24:1.

Tanks

The Warsaw Pact as a whole currently has around 67,000 tanks in service in Europe and Asia, facing NATO's 32,000 and China's 10,000: an advantage of more than two to one against NATO alone, and a lead of 1.6 to one against NATO and China combined.

Even this advantage, however, is being eroded. In recent years NATO countries have made considerable improvements in their anti-tank defences (Britain, for example, has tripled its stocks of anti-tank missiles since 1979). Over the last five years the number of tanks in NATO arsenals has increased by 20 per cent. And the introduction of new models, such as the German Leopard 2 and the American M-1, has ensured that NATO tanks continue to be considerably superior to their Soviet equivalents. Even with its numerical advantage, therefore, the Soviet Army would find that its tanks would face powerful, and probably unbeatable, opposition.

Aircraft

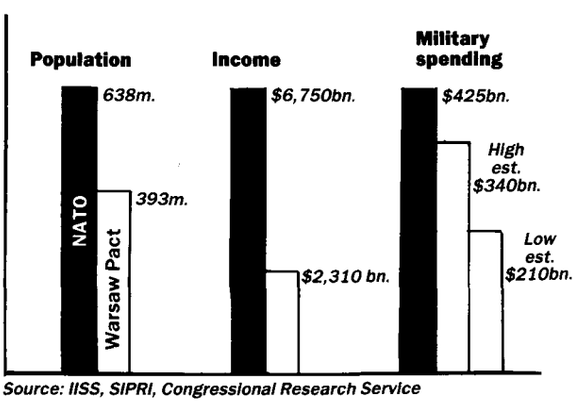
Figures from IISS show that both alliances currently have around 11,000 combat aircraft in service: rough numerical equality. However it is generally recognised that Western air forces have the qualitative edge. According to NATO's own analysis of the balance of forces in Europe, published in 1984: 'To a considerable degree, NATO air forces maintain a high state of readiness and are qualitatively superior to those of the Warsaw Pact.'

Technology

Alongside a situation of rough numerical parity between the alliances, the West enjoys a considerable qualitative advantage. In 1986 the Pentagon estimated that, out of the 20 most important areas of military technology, the US was superior in 14, the US and the Soviet Union were equal in 6, and the Soviet Union was ahead in *none*. Despite consuming around 15 per cent of their country's national income, the Soviet military cannot entirely avoid the technological backwardness that characterises the rest of the economy.

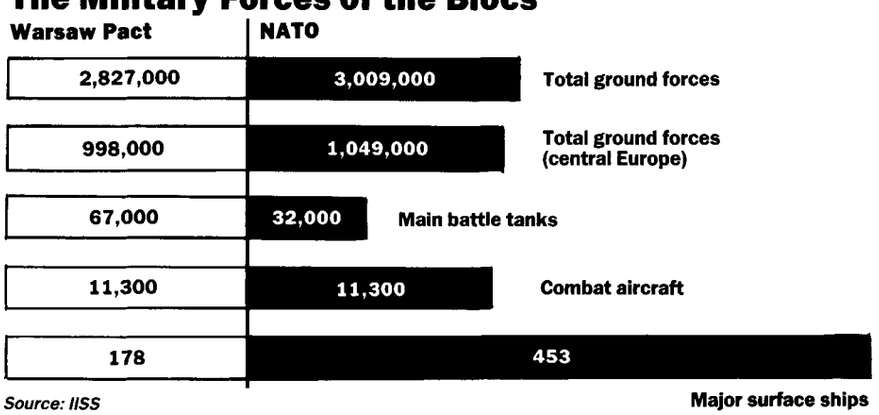
Malcolm Chalmers

The Resources of the Blocs



Source: IISS, SIPRI, Congressional Research Service

The Military Forces of the Blocs



Source: IISS

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ECONOMICS

Homes fit for rich heroes

John Rentoul

THE apparently rocket-assisted take-off of house prices in the South East is a phenomenon which affects nearly everyone, and yet which is barely understood. It is watched with semi-detached fascination. Wherever you go in this country, it is a conversation starter. London house prices are 'ridiculous'. They are denominated in 'funny money'. People you know have seen the value of their one-bedroom flat double in three years. But no one seems to know what is actually happening. 'It can't go on, can it?'

Yes it can. The principal cause of house price inflation is what people earn: since at least 1956 average house prices have varied between three and three-and-a-half times average male earnings for all but six years. Average house prices are lower now in relation to earnings than in 1979-80, let alone the historic surge of 1972-73, when average house prices touched five times earnings (equivalent to an *average* house price of £55,000 now).

What is different this time is that earnings have increased very unequally, within and between regions, and house prices likewise. The average house in London now costs £58,000. The average house in the North of England costs less than £24,000. The London house, which in 1979 was worth 1.7 times as much as the average Northern house, is now worth two-and-a-half times as much as the typical North of England home. Between 1979 and 1982, average house prices throughout Britain rose by less than the rate of inflation — and the gap between London and the North actually narrowed a little. But since 1982, average London house prices have doubled, rising by 58 per cent in real terms; whereas Northern prices have risen by just 8 per cent in real terms, cancelling out the previous fall and leaving prices, adjusted for inflation, exactly where they were in 1979.

These changes can be explained by what has been happening to people's incomes. House prices were initially held back by the sharp recession of 1980, since when unemployment has continued to dampen the rise in house prices in the West Midlands and all points north and west. Meanwhile, after-tax incomes for those in work have risen steadily but unequally.

> ***The average house in the North of England costs less than £24,000. The London house is now worth two-and-a-half times as much as the typical North of England home***

This has profound consequences, both for the distribution of wealth and the economics of saving and investment. In a now-famous article in the *Observer* (25 May 1986), Neal Ascherson suggested that the dying off of the first generation of home owners — the first boom in home ownership was in the 1930s — combined with the South East house price rise, would leave a new rich class with 'staggering reserves of liquid cash'. This is because inheritors would already be home owners themselves.

Research by Moira Munro in Glasgow confirms that this is precisely what is happening. Because Scottish property law is different, Glasgow has unique records of house sales and transfers, which can be checked against wills to trace the paths of inherited housing wealth. She found that with married couples, the initial transfer is typically to the surviving spouse, on whose death most of the wealth passes to the following generation, chiefly the children (*Housing Wealth and Inheritance*, Centre for Housing Research, University of Glasgow, January 1987).

So, most houses are inherited by people in their late 40s, and they tend to be the most expensive houses. Most inheritances are passed to just one person (even excluding inheritance by spouses), but because some estates are divided among three, four, five, or more, the *average* number of inheritors is around two. So normal inheritance — unlike inheritance patterns among the very rich — does not lead to a dispersal of wealth. Of course, because much wealth is in the form of housing, it can't be spent while it's being lived in; so inheriting houses within small family units leads to a great concentration of *liquid* wealth.

Further research by Moira Munro may show what people do with inherited houses. Many people must 'trade up', either by moving into the inherited house, or by selling it and buying a more expensive one. Following generations may benefit too, although not so directly; inheriting parents may pay for their children's further education, or professional training such as at law; or there may be a bonanza for private schools as inheritors provide for their grandchildren.

ONE OF the supposed spectators of the London house-price ascent is Margaret Thatcher, purchaser of a £350,000 house in Dulwich, now worth towards half a million. But her government is not a passive onlooker, watching market forces take their natural course. Total public spending on housing has not been cut under Mrs Thatcher: it has simply been shifted from council housing to subsidising home owners with mortgages.

The shift has been obscured by the fact that mortgage interest tax relief doesn't count as public spending, being revenue not collected rather than revenue spent. If it were counted as public spending, it would amount to £4,000 million a year, and the increase since 1979 would offset the fall in local councils' capital spending on housing. Also one million households have bought their homes at a deep discount from the council, and have been granted the (unequal) freedoms of the property market. If the value of these discounts were also counted as public spending, government housing expenditure would be even greater. But those who are left outside the ranks of the propertied classes — 44 per cent of the adult population — are worse off.

Research by Ray Forrest of Bristol University shows that the eighth of council housing stock that has been sold was the 'best' eighth — overwhelmingly houses rather than flats, in suburban and outer areas where owner-occupation is already high. He concludes (*Urban Studies*, 1987, 24) that the 'sale of council houses is leading to greater unevenness in the national pattern of housing tenure'.

Although the council housing stock has been reduced by an eighth, spending on council housing has been cut in half in real terms. The effects of this neglect don't need to be rehearsed here — they are the result of a deliberate policy in favour of a form of tenure which the Conservative Party thinks is politically helpful to it, but which costs the taxpayer just as much.

What is left of the private rented sector is, if anything, in a more decrepit state — which is unsurprising, as it is the only form of tenure which is not subsidised. The only part that is profitable is privately-rented accommodation for benefit claimants, which is surreptitiously subsidised through the DHSS. A young man telephoned us only last week to say that he was living in a bedsit in a converted house in outer London where he was paying £60 a week, and his landlady wanted to put it up by £10 a week. He is unemployed, and so his rent is paid by the DHSS, but he would be unable to pay the new rent if he got a job, and so threatened to apply to get a fair rent assessed. In turn, the landlady's husband threatened him with violence. This is what life is like for the two-million-plus people living in bedsits, lodgings, hostels and bed and breakfast hotels in Britain.

If the Conservatives win a third term, the outlook for the future is alarming. House prices in the South East will continue to rise as long as earnings and differentials increase. Roy Hattersley's plan to extract £3,500 million a year from the highest-paid 4 or 5 per cent would stifle estate agents' euphoria. But in a Tory third term, cuts in top tax rates would be on what rightwingers like to call 'the agenda'. Worse, Tory plans to replace domestic rates with a poll tax will increase average house prices by 12 to 15 per cent in England, and over 26 per cent in Scotland, according to Professor Gordon Hughes of Edinburgh University. This is because rates are a tax on housing services, the removal of which would put up the price. If re-elected, the Tories plan to bring in a poll tax in Scotland in 1989 and in the rest of the country thereafter.

> ***The eighth of council housing stock that has been sold was the 'best' eighth — overwhelmingly houses rather than flats***

And, as time passes, the effect of Nigel Lawson's abolition of lifetime Capital Transfer Tax in 1986 will enhance the Ascherson Effect, as this burgeoning wealth is inherited by the already well-off. □

John Rentoul's book, The Rich Get Richer: The growth of inequality in Britain in the 1980s, *is published by Pluto (Allison and Busby) next month.*

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A fraternal blank

On the 30th anniversary of the Common Market's founding, the Labour Party's hostility to the EEC has been replaced by indifference.* HUGH O'SHAUGHNESSY *argues for enthusiasm

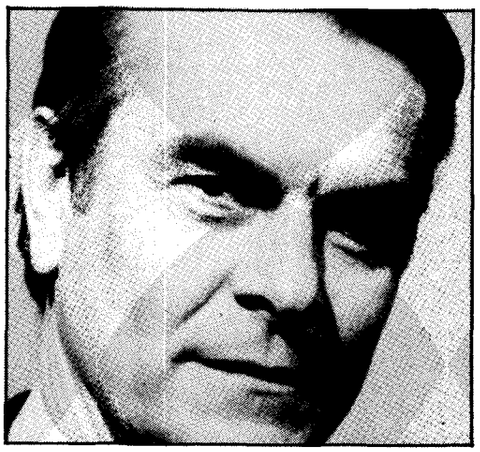
THEY HAVE just finished celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of the Treaty of Rome and the Labour Party is in the middle of a quiet political stocktaking on the subject. The fires of controversy which burned so brightly during the debate on British membership of the Community during the '70s have been damped down and the boundaries of partisanship have changed.

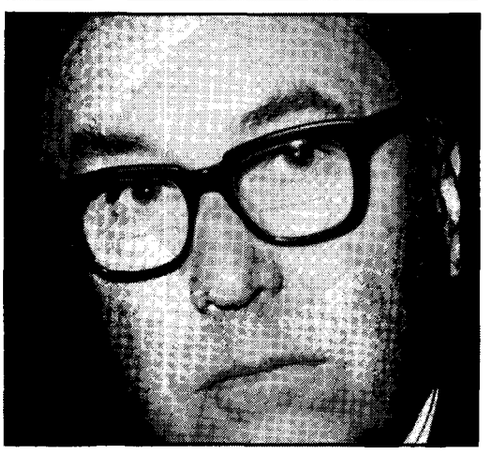
The frontiers of debate, which had the left solidly opposed to British accession and the right equally enthusiastic for it, have been blurred out of recognition. Indeed Frances Morrell in her recent article in the *New Statesman* (6 March) was only the latest in a series of figures of the left who have ceremoniously or tacitly dumped their opposition to membership of the Community and set themselves the task of thinking out new Labour attitudes to the rest of Europe. No longer are attitudes to Europe a sure guide to a Labour Party member's stance on a string of other issues.

The departure from Labour ranks of David Owen, Roy Jenkins, Shirley Williams and others has clearly contributed to a loosening up of debate. No longer is support for British membership of the Community seen as the first step on a slippery slope that leads to alignment with the Social Democrats.

The erstwhile faith of the left, hard and soft, that socialism could be constructed in Britain — indeed *should* be constructed in Britain — with no thought to the policies of our closest neighbours has waned as Britain's own international standing has waned. The painful experience of François Mitterrand when he attempted to create democratic socialism in one country has not gone unremarked even among the most fervent of the autonomist persuasion.

MEMBERSHIP of the Community has wrought its magic or cast its baleful spell, depending on your point of view. What must by now be clear is that the thickening webs of everyday familiarity with the rest of the Community, whether by use of a uniform postal rate within the Twelve, or by the realisation that Wolverhampton and Torremolinos are somehow in the same political setup, or by the vague realisation that there is another, European, parliament somewhere out there, have brought voters, particularly young voters to accept Britain's European involvement.





Once David, Shirley and Roy took themselves off, enthusiasm for the Community no longer had to be seen as the first step down a slippery slope

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Guardian 5 March 1987

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There is impatience with the stupidities of the European bureaucracy when they become evident to the general public in Britain; there is exasperation with the Common Agricultural Policy; there is distrust of an economic superstructure which seems to be being fashioned for the convenience of multinational corporations.

But what there is *not* is any widespread desire to go back on the opinions expressed in the referendum on Community membership, any longing to cut free of Continental entanglements. The British voter is, to put it no higher, acquiescent in the present situation.

And this popular mood cries out for a Labour initiative, some sign that the Party is seizing the opportunities offered by Community membership for helping to fashion a European security policy, or setting out new ideas on relationships with the Third World and new ways of dealing with its indebtedness. There is still a blank in the Party's programme for working with other European socialists on the transformation of the Rome treaty from a mere free-market, capitalist document into an effective instrument to create a fairer society.

Labour surely needs to think out its own approaches to these and many other strategies and then meet with its sister parties in Europe to create continental programmes. The reality is that little attention is being given to formulating these approaches and in the rare instances where Labour has worked out its European strategies they are scarcely debated with fraternal parties on the Continent.

For want of leadership from the Party at home the British Labour Group in the Strasbourg Parliament has been unable to work out any policy coherence; the Socialist International, despite its very evident usefulness and the greater importance Neil Kinnock has given to it, does not offer the permanent forum for dialogue that Labour and the Continental parties need. We are left with a bilateral relationship, recently formalised with the West German Social Democrats and the odd exchange sponsored by the Fabian Society.

This is backed up by threats to defy the organs of the Community if they obstruct a Labour government's plans to give particular job creating incentives to British industry. The impression is being given in some of the most diehard anti-Community corners of the Party that, if Labour is indeed obliged to stay within the Common Market, that fact is not going to stop a good and prolonged sulk. In an ironic reversal of the battle lines within the Labour Party of a decade ago there is developing a feeling within the anti-Europe camp that left-wing enthusiasts for Community membership will cut Britain off from the markets of the Commonwealth and the Third World whose citizens are somehow being deprived of the opportunity of buying British goods.

A conference held last week in London by the Fabians brought pro- and anti-Marketeers together for 24 hours of intellectual gymnastics about Europe of a kind which should have been practiced by Labour for years past. Spots of stiffness were found, a few cases of tunnel vision were diagnosed but the experience was salutary. After a few more of these sessions in the gym it'll be time to send the troops out onto the assault courses. If British socialists cannot field an international brigade to go into battle in the cause of a socialist Europe they'll be left in a corner glaring and grumpy, disgruntled and powerless. □

EUROPE — ITALIAN COMMUNISM

Eurocommunism looks east

DONALD SASSOON *concludes his two-part report on how the West's largest Communist Party sees its big brother in Moscow*

THE MOSCOW correspondent of *L'Unità*, the daily of the Italian Communist Party (PCI), is Giulietto Chiesa. He grew up politically in the 1960s: he does not have the slightest respect for the sacred cows of the communist tradition. He 'covers' the USSR as he probably would the USA. He has neither the jaundiced eye of a now disillusioned camp follower nor the 'let's give them the benefit of the doubt' syndrome of the professional groveller. Not all his readers appreciate him, however. Some even turned up to heckle him when he was taking part at a round-table discussion during a 'Festival dell'Unità'.

For an in-depth debate on Soviet reforms one has to turn to *Rinascita*, the party's somewhat intellectual and often formidably boring party weekly. The opening shots were fired in November last year in a massive five-part essay by Zdenek Mlynar. This was a telling choice. Mlynar, a Czech communist, was a law student in Moscow with Gorbachev. By 1968 Mlynar was secretary of the Central Committee of the Czech Communist Party. After the Soviet invasion he resigned his party post and was expelled from the party in 1970, signed Charter 77 and, consequently, lost his job. In June last year he emigrated to Austria where he now runs a major project on 'The crises of Soviet-type regimes'.

Mlynar is a sophisticated proponent of the 'revolution from above' position. He points out that all previous attempts to reform the Soviet economy have failed because they have come up against political problems. What is necessary is to move from quantitative development (increase in the size of the labour force, more investments, more factories) to a phase of qualitative development based on 'intensive' factors such as productivity, innovation, efficiency and the adoption of modern working methods by managers and workforce. In other words, the economy needs a workforce which is wide awake, on the lookout for improvements, enthusiastic, not afraid to have ideas, to express them, to make suggestions, to offer criticisms.

There are obviously many obstacles to this, particularly the common and tragic historical experience shared by different generations and social groups. It has been, to say the least, extremely dangerous to get mixed up in any attempt to suggest changes, single out contradictions and make criticisms. Another obstacle, according to Mlynar, is represented by the fact that it is not the case that there is an oppressed and downtrodden population, uniformly yearning for the arrival of the shining knight of reform on a white horse to liberate them from faceless bureaucrats and sadistic policemen. The forces pro- and anti-reform are dispersed across Soviet society.

This is why Mlynar believes that one can hope to democratise the USSR *only* through a procedure which is fundamentally 'from above' — i.e. autocratic. The decision-making process will have to maintain its basic authoritarian imprint though it should encourage wide consultation and the gradual participation of a wider social group. If

'Oh no, it's the collapse of the alternative economic strategy!'

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Gorbachev really wants to reform the USSR he will have to use those levers of command he has inherited from the Russian past. The reforming knight must hold on to the mantle of Peter the Great at least for a whole intermediate phase during which the old mechanism of power no longer works but the new and democratic one is not yet established.

Mlynar is well aware that Soviet civil society is complex and varied. He cites approvingly the works of Tatyana Zaslavskaya, one of the *nouvelle vague* of Soviet sociology, author of the celebrated Novosibirsk Study (1983) critical of the planned economy. One of her recent articles breaks new ground in offering an account of the complex stratification of Soviet society many miles removed from the (Stalinist) simplifications of 'workers, kolkoz labourers and members of the intelligentsia' happily subsumed under the category of 'the people'. Zaslavskaya's groups have different incomes, different housing, occupy different positions in the division of labour, belong to various nationalities. They have different interests and aspirations.

Mlynar does not disagree with this but claims that many of these groups will oppose reforms, if they are allowed to do so. There are powerful social strata, informally organised, and quite corrupt, who will use every means available to block change. These are not a few individuals but hundreds of thousands of people throughout Soviet society. This is why any modern-day Peter the Great would have to use an iron fist.

It would be absurd and utopian to think that the reform will give Soviet citizens the right to associate freely in new organisations which may threaten the party's monopoly of power. What one can expect is that the individual will *count* more in associations that exist already, such as trade unions and youth groups and which, so far, have been little more than the obedient tools of the Party.

Excessive bureaucracy

The reactions to Mlynar were varied. The first contribution came from Moscow and was written by Otto Lazis, a senior writer of the journal of the Central Committee. Only two years ago it would have been unthinkable that a Soviet official would debate with a Czech dissident in the pages of the weekly of the PCI. Proprieties were respected though: Lazis never mentions Mlynar's name — though he does not disagree with him and confirms that political reforms are above all an instrument for economic restructuring. He quite clearly states that economic priorities will have to change. Some people (teachers, health workers) will get increases in wages, others will not; while retail prices of some basic foodstuffs will go up. How to cope with the potential conflicts? Lazis says that there should be more democracy through revitalised soviets, but there should also be more centralism. What's wrong with the country is not centralism but excessive bureaucracy, too many ministries, too many local interests and lack of planning (*sic*).

The older generation of PCI Soviet specialists, like Adriano Guerra, are certainly impressed with the way issues are now discussed but, paradoxically, they worry now that there is too much of a gap between the dynamism of Soviet policy and the paralysis of the American one. They pray that a more efficient and credible administration will emerge in Washington.

Most of the contributions from the new generation of Italian Soviet specialists (nearly all of them in or around the PCI), however, took issue with Mlynar's pessimistic assessment or his caution.

Some, supported by American experts such as R. V. Daniels (University of Vermont) and Stephen Cohen (Princeton), wrote that if Gorbachev is serious he must start with a radical critique of Stalinism and call for a grand historiographical debate on the country's past. Lilly Marcou (CRNS, Paris), however, pointed out that Gorbachev had already broken ideologically with bipolarism in favour of interdependence and no longer regarded war as an instrument of policy.

Most contributors were pessimistic: Michal Reiman (Free University, Berlin) thought that it was still much too early to assume that the reformers would win while Pierre Kende (Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris) suggested that political reforms were quite unlikely to occur because there were neither internal nor external pressures for them. Equally pessimistic was Andras Hegedus (Hungary) who pointed out that Gorbachev wants more order and discipline, hardly an enlightened request. The crucial variable had to be foreign policy. If Gorbachev wants reforms he will have to dump Brezhnev's 'utopian' priority in foreign policy: the achievement of military parity with the USA over the long run. He would then have to brave the wrath of the military lobby.

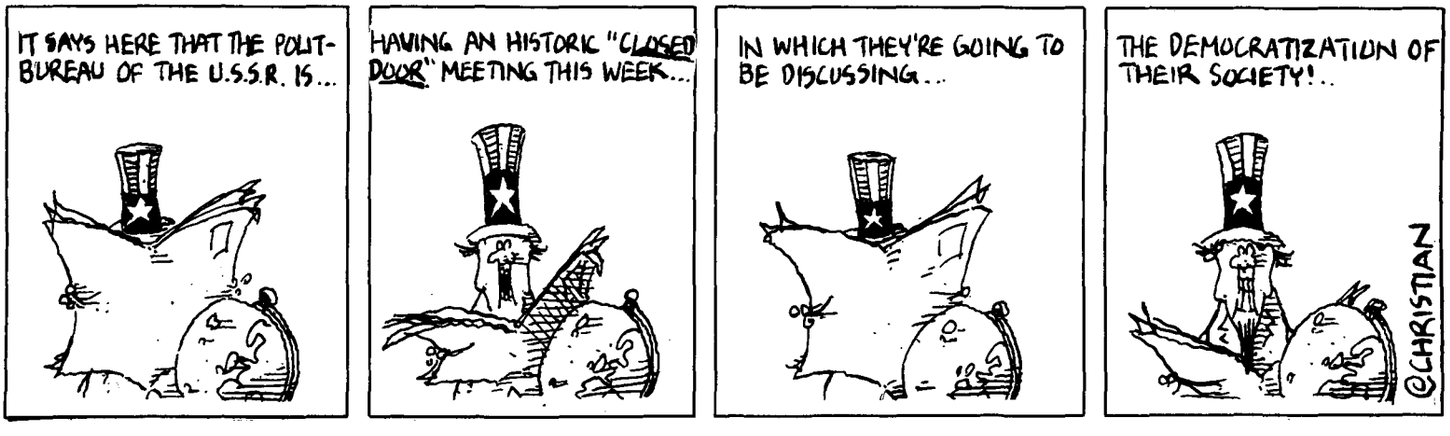
Cultural revolution

The most lucid answer to Mlynar, however, came from another East European, the Polish economist Wladimir Brus, now at Oxford. Brus says that *if* Mlynar is right and that political changes have to be contained within the existing institutional system, then there will be no real reform of the Soviet economy. It is necessary that the diverse social interests (whose existence is recognised by both Mlynar and Otto Lazis) be allowed to find an *independent* institutional representation.

The central authorities need really free trade unions, consumers, associations, cultural and professional associations because without them they cannot overcome the two main obstacles to an effective decision-making process: the lack of information and the 'them and us' attitude which separates the population from the public sector of the economy. All this is important not just for reasons of civil rights or democracy, claims Brus, but because, in the absence of a market mechanism which reveals consumers' preference, decision-makers really need to know what is going on and this in turn requires free participation in autonomous organisations. Thus no real democracy = no real economic reforms.

What the debate has done is to highlight an important contradiction. If democracy is to be pursued not for its own sake but because it is necessary for economic ends, then the new freedoms will only be allowed for ends which are not considered dangerous by the reformers. This would assume that the reformers are so knowing and enlightened that they know beforehand what everyone should do. In this case the politically prudent individual who discovers that he/she is expected to 'think critically' will try very hard to find out what it is that Gorbachev and his comrades are thinking in order to repeat it . . . just as they used to do under Stalin and under Brezhnev.

We are all back to the drawing board. If, on the other hand, individuals and groups are allowed 'to do their own thing' it could unleash an upheaval, a sort of 'cultural revolution' Russian-style, which would be ungovernable simply because the USSR has (as yet) no political machine and has no political rules which can cope with uninhibited pluralism. □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All centrists now

France's Socialist Party will signal a move to the right at its Congress in Lille this weekend.* DAVID BELL *reports

BETWEEN 1981, when François Mitterrand won the presidential elections and followed that up with a sweeping Socialist victory in the legislative elections, and 1968, when the left lost the Assembly elections, there have been two major changes in the French political landscape.

The first is that the Communist Party has collapsed from 20 per cent of the voters (a level it hovered around for most of the Fifth Republic) to under 10 per cent: it is now a negligible force. The Communist Party, pro-Russian, Stalinist, quasi-racist and led by a buffoon with a sinister past, has retreated into rancorous isolation and is on the way out. It couldn't happen to a nicer bunch. Even the strikes and demonstrations against the right-wing government of Jacques Chirac, which were a feature of the Christmas period, happened without, and to some extent despite, the Communist Party. For what it is worth, if André Lajoinie — as hard-line as Party leader Georges Marchais — runs as the Communist presidential candidate, the polls give him 2-5 per cent. Nobody in the Socialist Party has given much thought to the Communists except former socialist Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy, who seems to think that if you kiss the toad hard enough it will become a prince.

> ***The tenor of debate has shifted to the centre in an attempt to woo the floating voter. Everybody is now a centrist — there have not been such mass conversions since a Chinese Emperor christened people with a hose***

The other change is what the French call *cohabitation* — the co-existence of President Mitterrand and Prime Minister Chirac. Chirac's support by the Assembly's conservative majority means that the President only has the powers to advise, encourage and to warn: this has, however, been an effective lever against a government given to blundering about and applying 'free-market' nostrums. A socialist victory in the presidential election of 1988 is thus very much in prospect.

These two factors explain much of the change in the Socialist Party, which retains a taste for government, and which sees its 1981-86 record in a very favourable light. The party, which polled 32 per cent at the last elections, can only get back into power with the help of the missing 10 per cent of centrist voters (assuming Communist support, that is). The result has been that the tenor of debate has shifted to the centre in an attempt to woo the floating voter. Everybody is now a centrist — there have not been such mass conversions since a Chinese Emperor christened people with a hose. The only brief flirtation with a 'left-wing' policy (based on some discontent over Christmas) was by Jean Poperen, the Socialist Party's unpopular no. 2, and was firmly slapped down. There is Party activist discontent but this group — transcourants — *is pained by the factional fighting which is a French speciality and is, if anything, more conservative and restrained than the party grandees.*

Visionless pragmatism

The Party Congress, which is to be held in Lille on 2-5 April, will be marked by this slow bicycle-race to the middle ground. The party's self-styled left (CERES) has been dissolved and has emerged as a boudoir version with its teeth filed down — while its leader, Jean-Pierre Chevènement, who made a mark as an orthodox Education Minister singing the praises of 'Republican elitism', is now a serious presidential hopeful (Chevènement has recently 'discovered' Europe and European co-operation). Laurent Fabius, too, has undergone a conversion from the activist who brought the 1979 Metz Congress to its feet (by asserting that between Russian-style planning and the market there was . . . socialism) to become the guardian of orthodoxy, modernisation and international competitiveness — a rabble-soother. Pierre Joxe, the Marxist fundamentalist and former Interior Minister, has been caught playing footsie with the Christian Democrats — and so on.

The party does, however, find itself currently offering only a visionless pragmatism. Chevènement is correct in pointing out that Socialists need a mobilising project (which CERES, as it happens, is willing to provide) but in this the Socialists will pay dearly for their years of contempt for vulgar Northern European social democracy and the moral imperative of social reform. One of the difficulties the Socialists now face is that the right is sweeping away many of the measures introduced from 1981-86 and Chirac has caught the privatisation habit. In government Socialists paid too little attention to public opinion, in particular to making sure that majorities backed reforms and that, because of popular consensus support, they would be difficult to reverse.

If personalities are stripped away, however, Socialist debate comes down to a not very edifying discussion about the role of the state in which First Secretary Lionel Jospin and the Mitterrand majority take the view that the state has a positive duty to intervene in the economy and to reassert equalities while Michel Rocard places the emphasis on the incapacity of the state to produce goods efficiently. There is only a piece of tissue paper between them: both sides are scornful of the new right ideologies who have popped up in the Chirac government and both lay great emphasis on the need for social cohesion and modernisation (the need to fit France to the challenge of the 21st century) and neither seems much inclined to play up the two major measures of the Socialist government — nationalisation and decentralisation.

The official resolution of the Lille Congress, which has been proposed and will no doubt be accepted with virtually no dissent by the activists who have to ratify it before April, positively exudes good sense and moderation. The 'class struggle' is now of purely archaeological interest and the Marxist language has now been replaced by (numbingly) bland prose. An alliance with the centre — perhaps the Christian Democrats — in the Assembly is left open as a *possibility* (if the Socialist candidate wins the presidential election) but the question of who their candidate will be is not closed and will not be closed by the Congress.

Floating voters

In effect, the April Congress in Lille will be a beauty contest in which the leaders of the party's main factions, who are also the contenders for the presidential nomination, will parade before the activists (and the media). All eyes will be on the 1988 presidential elections. Although the party looks ideologically homogenous, there are sharp differences between the personalities: and once again, the individual who stands out is Rocard. He has been offering the kind of freedom and fairness programme the party is now searching for since joining the Socialists in 1974 — but he could be seen off by Mitterrand running again, or could face competition from somebody within Mitterrand's group if the President stands down. Despite the surface unity, another War of the Roses is possible.

> ***The most controversial item will be a rewritten statement of party principles, in which its Marxist revolutionary past will be edited out***

Whoever bears the standard, it will be pink rather than red. The most controversial item for the Lille conference will be a rewritten statement of party principles, in which its Marxist, revolutionary past will be edited out and it will be able to present itself as a modern, social democratic party. It will cause ructions, but it will get through.

The party must appeal to a very wide spectrum of support. The Congress will have various solutions on offer from the faction leaders, and the Congress motion with its practical and concrete proposals will make a start. Socialist capability and governmental experience will be hammered home, and internal party adjustments will be made in preparation for the next election. The Congress will see also some organisational problems sorted out, and the promotion of some new faces: but these will be set in the context of the fight to win over the uncommitted. This is a strategic problem which will be familiar to supporters of the Labour Party: for the French Socialists and British Labour are making a pitch for much the same group of people — the floating vote. □

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Anger is not enough

Two years after the end of the miners' strike, Arthur Scargill faces the deadliest of his enemies: his left-wing colleagues.* JOHN LLOYD *and* JOHN SWEENEY *report

Camera Press

Mick McGahey: 'If there is a right-wing tendency in the movement, then it should get expression. You can't hound them out'

ARTHUR SCARGILL is now between a stone and a hard place. He has no leverage on British Coal and he is under sustained attack from the left within his own union. His supporters are losing their places on the executive. The South Wales area of the union is in open revolt against his leadership.

Even the election of Sammy Thompson, the Yorkshire vice-president, to the national vice-presidency is not the unalloyed blessing it has been portrayed to be. Thompson won because Yorkshire is now more numerically dominant than it has ever been, as the peripheral coalfields decline rapidly. He has criticised Scargill's reliance on a new 'broad left', Militant-led grouping — actually, the narrowest left the NUM has ever seen — and is likely to be his own man, especially if the trend is against the President. Just before Thompson won, Yorkshire elected a right-winger, John Walsh, to a place on the national executive. Arthur Scargill, the most charismatic and compelling orator, the most rigidly faithful revolutionary, the man with no enemies on his left, is sinking slowly into impotence.

The split in the NUM left which was dramatised by the competition between Thompson and Eric Clarke of Scotland — both left-wingers — is now given voice. In interviews this week with the *New Statesman*, and with Thames TV's *This Week*, Michael McGahey, the retiring national vice-president and President of the Scottish area, made clear — in his oblique and careful fashion — the profound differences within a left which has had more purchase on British politics than any other group of individuals within the labour movement outside of Labour cabinets.

Why is this still important? Most, after all, have dismissed the miners' strike from their minds, an incident of two years' vintage which did not, in the end, change anything nearly so much as the miners' strike of 1973/74, which helped spark the general election in which the Heath government was defeated. The left, especially, has been concerned to close rather than examine the wound. Why reopen it?

For two reasons. First, because the NUM is not finished. It remains an industrially powerful union, whose industrial action — *if supported by other workers* — could quickly reduce industrial and private life in Britain to misery. That we have become used not to thinking in such terms is merely the brevity of memory.

More importantly in the present: the miners' strike was the left's watershed, inadequately grasped at the time, inadequately analysed since. Arthur Scargill's project — the personalisation is inevitable: those purists who reject it reject the manifest evidence that here, as in many other instances, personality *does* matter — was to use the miners as a battering ram to breach the walls of the Thatcher government where everyone else had failed. It was 'ourselves alone': the miners with no help (except in supporting roles) from other unions, certainly none from the TUC or the Labour Party, forcing the state to its knees, dictating terms for the next Labour government. Its failure has not meant that the left regroups for a better shove next time. It has meant that the division in the left has drawn a sharp line (for now, at least) between putsch and reform.

McGahey's crucial role

Michael McGahey is crucial in this. A Communist since his teens, he has gone with the 'eurocommunist' leadership of the Communist Party in *its* split: but he is a proleterian, rather than a common-room, intellectual. He told Edward Heath, to his face, that he wanted him out of Downing Street. His desire for socialism is both practically expressed and an ideal governing the moral code by which he leads his life. His questioning of the very fundamentals of the strike — though not the need for it — thus marks certain limits for political action in the future.

This is not to endow him with a position he would not hold. Had the miners' strike been won under the same terms as it was lost, he would have had — probably — few qualms. Like every activist, he takes opportunities when he sees them. But it *was* lost: and he draws lessons meant to have an impression on the left.

He has aligned himself with, among others, the South Wales miners against Scargill in their insistence that a new coking coal pit at Margam be developed, even if it means considering shifts based on a six-day, rather than five-day, standard working patterns. South Wales played a schizophrenic role in the strike: by far the most solid area — only a few hundred had returned to work by the end, in contrast with the many thousands everywhere else — it was also the first of the left-led areas to show more or less open disaffection with the Scargill leadership.

It stuck its neck out and proposed ending the strike without an agreement two years ago. The area leadership allowed its tough, funny, anarchic research officer, Kim Howells, to voice — ever more frankly — their own dislike for the Sheffield diktat. The last issue of its journal, the *South Wales Miner*, refutes Scargill's charge that the area is 'collaborationist' by calling the allegation 'irresponsible . . . vicious . . . a terrible slur.' It will be some four or five years before agreements have to be concluded on Margam: but the dispute

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in the left has found this cause because it was looking for something around which to hang the bitterness it feels.

SCARGILL has been unable to keep the support in defeat he had in struggle. Unhappiness with the Scargill style is a common, whispered theme at St James's House, the NUM head office in Sheffield. All phone calls are electronically monitored and Scargill sees a print-out at the end of the week. All mail is handled centrally, and some of it disappears. One prominent NEC member told me (*Sweeney*) he posted a letter to a senior national officer about a sensitive matter: it never arrived. Information is hoarded, not dispersed. No one can talk to the media apart from Scargill and press officer Nell Myers (who signs her memos with a drawing of a smiling face). All roads lead to the boss. This may happen elsewhere, but many NUM officers find it unsettling.

One example is Peggy Kahn, a research officer with the union for two years until she left during the strike. Next month she will voice her critique of the strike — 'Coal Not Dole — The British Miners' Strike, 84-85' — in the American journal, *Socialist Review*. Kahn, while stressing her support for the miners and the difficulties for the union in the changed political and economic climate, did not enjoy working in what she calls a 'very personalist regime'. The monitoring of the post and phone-calls contributed to an unnecessary state of siege and surveillance. It was a very uncomfortable and unfriendly atmosphere in the office.

'There is a definite problem in Scargill not being able to engage in dialogue. He does not listen to people. Unity comes from uniting diversity, rather than recreating Yorkshire mechanically. Trying to impose unity without flexibility and by repeating yourself: that was part of his style. In general left politics in the union seemed increasingly focused through Scargill's charismatic and authoritarian personality, his pride in working the union machine, his political beliefs formed in the Young Communist League in the Fifties and the successful disputes in the Seventies. Scargill's strategy cannot survive outside Yorkshire.'

In his interview with Trevor Phillips for *This Week*, McGahey used an arresting phrase. 'I have to say to him (Scargill) that anger is not enough. If anger was sufficient our forefathers would have won the battle many years ago . . . so we need more than anger. We need tactics and policies that win people: win people to come over to us.'

McGahey went further in an interview with the *New Statesman*. Invited to comment on the strike itself, he replied: 'To say that you can go through a year's strike with all the traumatic events we went through from March 1984 to March 1985 and say we'd do all the same things again — no.' He then posed a series of questions — questions which, by their shape, suggest the answers.

- 'Did we sufficiently recognise the plans of the government — their organisational ability, their use of the police?'
- 'Was mass picketing the answer? Because even at Orgreave, where we had the most famous and biggest picket, the police outmatched us.'
- 'Did we in the course of that year, going through the British coalfield, see mass meetings as mass movements — when in fact they were *just* mass meetings?'
- 'Did we underestimate the ability of the media to isolate many miners on the question of violence on the picket line?'

On the core of the matter — the calling of the strike without a ballot — McGahey insists that 'the miners never demanded a ballot vote, and the constitutional process allowed the miners to have a ballot vote had they demanded it'.

But he puts this forward, too: 'I'm not sure that the ballot vote question did not penetrate into people's minds — because of the traditional democracy of the British people. They asked — why *not* a ballot vote? And did that not isolate us?'

The national leadership of the union — which McGahey christened the 'troika' — was the first all-left leadership in the NUM's history. Was that a source of weakness, rather than strength?

'The right wing was not excluded from the executive. They may not have felt confident enough to be vocal: but they were not excluded. But I do believe that a more critical — and shall I suggest, a more self-critical — approach to the miners' strike, in analysing the lessons for the future, might have been beneficial for young trade unionists. You can't exclude the fact that not every miner is a left-winger. And if there is a tendency in the movement, a right-wing tendency, then it should get expression, just as the left tendency should get expression. You can't hound them out.'

> ***'I say to Arthur that anger is not enough. If anger was sufficient our forefathers would have won the battle many years ago. We need tactics and policies that win people over: win people to come over to us. I regret those colleagues who want to discipline the Union of Democratic Mineworkers'***

Was there a time in the course of the strike when settlement was possible? McGahey insists neither the then chairman of the National Coal Board, Ian (now Sir Ian) McGregor, nor the government, would allow a settlement. (That is probably a wrong assessment: they would have settled, gladly, in the first two thirds of the strike — though they would then have shut pits.) But he goes on to muse: 'Was there a period when we could have come to a compromise, and placed the responsibility back on the British people, and said — it's your industry? All these things have to be thought about, called back to mind. Was there such a period?'

Criticisms of the strike

Since the strike, McGahey's criticisms, private for most of the time, have grown. Crucially, he believes Scargill has been too 'abrasive' in his handling of the Union of Democratic Mineworkers — who must, he says, be won back. 'They will require help and assistance from the NUM. They can't live alone. A young colleague from Nottingham called for them to be disciplined. I reject those colleagues who want to discipline them. They must rejoin the NUM on the basis of the constitution.'

A member of the TUC general council during the strike — McGahey was the ambassador to the TUC, often a delicate task — he has seen in the isolation of the miners the need for future actions to be co-ordinated by the general council — a general council Scargill held to be little short of treacherous. 'If Thatcher really wants to take socialism off the agenda, then all the more need for the unions to come together to defend themselves against attack. The miners' strike showed the need for that.'

On the South Wales issue, he shows himself a relativist. The five-day week, he suggests, is not sacrosanct — recalling the introduction of it in May 1947, followed five months later by its voluntary suspension while the miners responded to a plea from Clement Attlee to dig more coal. Sir Robert Haslam, the British Coal chairman, is, he thinks, concerned to dig himself out of the ditches which McGregor had dug for him.

And what, finally, of his 'young comrade' (now 50) — Arthur Scargill? 'I don't have any great difficulty with Arthur. One thing I want to make clear — I will not have him utilised as a sacrificial lamb. If there were mistakes — lessons to be learned — then we're all involved. That to some extent has been the role of the media — to isolate him to make him the big menace. I think — if he carries his executive — he has a big contribution to make.'

He paused. 'And if he listens. And listens carefully.'

McGAHEY MUST know that Scargill will not now listen. He has done — and will do — what he has always said: he will carry on down his chosen path of no compromise until he is stopped, or thrown out of office — or until the times change, and he again makes sense to his members, as once he did to the activists among them.

For where McGahey has read one set of messages in the strike, Scargill would not, could not, learn. For the older man, Marxism was a framework within which there was room for ebbs and flows: for the younger, the inevitability of history's bestowal of the prize to the proletariat was so certain that his position did not require to be changed.

McGahey is the man whose intelligence, rectitude and warmth will ensure that his retirement from the union in July will be a great affair, with tributes flowing faster than the whisky. But Scargill? He was, after all, the man who acted on everyone else's rhetoric. The man who really *did* try to bring down a government his fellow union leaders could only fulminate against. Who forced everyone into the hideous posture of coming off the fence. Who called on the left to show the colour of its money — and found most of it to be brass.

This man, always unimaginably lonely, never able to trust anyone other than himself, put on the armour of the left's words and charged. A sacrificial lamb, indeed. Now, he forces the left to ask — what if he had *won*? Would that have been a good thing for the left?

None has answered aloud. Even in his waning power, he still commands silence on what question. But its answer is no. □

John Sweeney was the researcher with reporter Trevor Phillips and producer Anne Tyerman on This Week's *'Scargill and the Miners — '87'.*

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MEDIA

You guys are the pits

Alastair Campbell

THEY SAY that dog shouldn't eat dog. But there are times when you get angry, and you take the risk. Today is one of them.

Last Thursday I sat alongside Neil Kinnock as Concorde flew him to New York on the eve of his Washington talks with President Reagan. He was in a good mood, confident that his 'mission impossible' to promote his controversial defence policies would be a success.

Then we went through the morning papers. Almost without exception, they wrote of the disaster that was looming for the Labour leader in the lions' den of the White House. 'You get used to it,' he said, as we turned from one paper to another, all telling the same, sad story.

Later that day, Kinnock addressed the American-European Community Association in New York. A US businessman, during a question-and-answer session, raised a story in the *Guardian*, published some time ago, about Michael Meacher's less than flattering view of the 'special relationship' between the US and Britain. Phil Webster of *The Times*, and Michael Cassells of the *Financial Times*, had been chosen to go in on behalf of us all, because of their fast and accurate shorthand.

When Webster emerged to fill us in, we had a story. Kinnock had written a few good headlines in responding to the 'special relationship' question — 'Reagan's poodle', 'Thatcher being led by the nose', '51st State under Tory rule'. It was, it has to be admitted, a good story. On the eve of talks with Reagan, Kinnock savages the American President's closest ally.

Only that wasn't the story that millions of British newspaper readers read about the next day. The *Express* splashed with 'Kinnock's "poodle" blunder', a huge headline mixing news with comment, followed by a story presenting Kinnock's outburst as 'a major political gaffe', and 'yet another political setback Labour can ill afford'.

From there it was on to Washington, Kinnock and team heading to the British Embassy, the press pack to the glorious Embassy Row Hotel. We were all invited to the Kinnock reception at the Embassy. The very first person who introduced himself to me inside the reception — a full-time Treasury official based in Washington — suggested there was a good story to be found in the guest list — by looking for the people who failed to turn up. 'Paul Newman', he said with a wink. 'The owners of the Washington Redskins.' Another wink. And sure enough, the papers two days later contained accounts of the 'US snub' to Kinnock. Well done, Treasury official, and thank you for agreeing with me that nobody had ever really believed in monetarism, apart from Mrs Thatcher.

THE FUN really started in Washington. The Brits took their place alongside the 13 TV crews permanently stationed at the door to the White House, and awaited Kinnock's arrival. He was driven up in a grey Rolls Royce, seated alongside British Ambassador Sir Anthony Acland. Shadow Foreign Secretary Denis Healey and Charles Clarke, Kinnock's chief political advisor, followed in a white Jag. He went in at 9.57am and emerged just after half past ten.

He faced the full might of the White House TV reporters confidently and in good cheer. He spoke of the 'concerns' expressed by Reagan at Labour's non-nuclear defence policies. He was pleased that Reagan had volunteered an assurance that he would not interfere in the next general election back home. 'But he loves Margaret Thatcher,' said ABC's Sam Donaldson, doyen of the press corps. 'He loves everybody,' said Healey.

The talks, everyone concluded, had been a success. I called the *Daily Mirror* in London and told them to expect a good story. The representatives of the Tory tabloids looked dejected. Their gloom was shortlived. As the Kinnock press conference came to an end, Stuart Trotter of the *Glasgow Herald* arrived with the White House version of events.

Reagan's press secretary, Marlin Fitzwater, had said:

> Let me just give you a brief readout on the meeting this morning with Neil Kinnock, the Opposition party leader of Great Britain. The meeting lasted approx. 20 minutes. It was polite and businesslike. Both the Leader and the President emphasised a long and friendly relationship between the US and Great Britain. Kinnock raised Labour's proposals for a unilateral nuclear disarmament and the need to build up conventional forces. The President made clear that he had no intention of intervening in Britain's domestic affairs but he said we disagree with Labour's defence policy. The President said Kinnock's proposals would have a strong effect on NATO, on East-West relations and would undercut our negotiating position in Geneva. The President said that firmness and solidarity was important, that he believes strongly in SDI, that it moved the Soviets to the bargaining table and strengthens our hand on the INF talks. The President concluded by saying: 'We must be prepared — unlike we were before World War 2 — we cannot let that happen again.'

Nobody could believe it. Kinnock had lied. He'd been eaten alive by Reagan. How could he have done something so stupid? I confess that I too was taken in by the White House line. I had already written the 'triumph' story. That had to be ripped up and 'triumph' replaced with 'disaster'. But first I had to find Kinnock.

Eventually we tracked down Pat Hewitt and put all the White House claims to her. She said there were inaccuracies in the Fitzwater statement and promised to get hold of Kinnock for us for a few quotes. I asked her for an official, on-the-record reaction to the apparent discrepancies. She insisted: 'The talks went well. It is nonsense to say Mr Kinnock was savaged. It is wrong to say the meeting lasted less than 20 minutes.'

Everyone took a note of what she said. But, as she headed off to find Kinnock, who as we spoke was being applauded onto the floor of the Senate chamber, I was the only one to file the denial of the White House version. I asked Pat Ramsey, the US PRO helping the Kinnock camp with the American press relations, if I could use the phone in Denis Healey's car. She agreed and while I was placing the call, we chatted about the British press. 'It's a joy to work with someone like Kinnock', she said, 'but you guys really are the pits. If the truth ever went near most of you, you'd run a mile.'

KINNOCK WAS still in confident mood when he emerged to see us. He could scarcely believe what he was hearing. 'But who are we supposed to believe?' he was asked. 'That's up to you,' he said. 'I've told you what happened and there it is.' He said that the phrase 'undercut our position at Geneva' was never used. Many of the criticisms mentioned by Fitzwater were never raised. 'So are they lying? I asked him. Is he the victim of a White House plot? He refused to speculate and headed downtown for a live ITN interview. Pat Hewitt promised to call us at the hotel and tell us what he'd said.

As their cars disappeared, at least one of the British reporters present (who works for a mass-selling newspaper) said he wouldn't be filing any of the Kinnock denials. They 'knocked' the story he had already sent.

Later on the flight back I sat with Kinnock as he drank some birthday champagne provided as a gift by the British Airways crew. Just before take-off I had spoken to the *Mirror* newsdesk, who had told me what treatment the papers had given to the Kinnock-Reagan meeting. I told Kinnock the headlines: 'The Revenge of Reagan' (*Mail*), 'Angry Reagan slays Kinnock' (*Express*), 'Reagan warns Kinnock over his defence policies' (*Independent*), 'Reagan blasts ban-the-bomb Kinnock' (*Star*), 'Reagan rebuff for Kinnock over defence' (*Times*), while the *Sun* managed to give the impression that Kinnock's defence policies were likely to cause World War Three. He smiled and shook his head. 'And they wonder why I don't like talking to them.'

I had agreed, on behalf of the handful of journalists who shared Kinnock's flight home, to ask him to join us all for a chat. 'Tell them to talk to Pat,' he said, shaking his head. 'If I thought for one minute they were interested in the truth, I would. But they're not.'

'Tell them you've been stitched up,' I suggested. 'It's what everyone thinks.'

'I can see the "Kinnock whingeing" headlines now,' he said.

Both in Washington and London there was widespread revulsion at the way the US Administration had behaved. All week, we had been warned by the White House: 'There will be no briefing from our side. If there is, State will do it.' But the White House, and above all the National Security Council, were worried that the 'pinkoes' from State would give Kinnock an easy ride, and possibly tell the truth about the meeting.

When we eventually got the Kinnock denial of the White House version, and the full horror of the Washington propaganda machine began to become exposed, the reaction of the Tory press was not to establish what really happened in those 28 minutes in Reagan's office. Instead they were hell-bent on making sure that the US plot to stitch Kinnock didn't backfire. Nothing could be allowed to detract from the visit to Moscow by 'Thatcher the Votecatcher' (*Mirror*), so that 'Supermag' could make 'Mother Russia melt for Maggie' (*Express*) and light 'A Flame for Freedom' (*Mail*). And let her supporters back home deny she had been in any way involved in the cynical US plot, hatched with the help of a cynical, cowardly and corrupt Tory press. □

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The Mantle of Nye

JOHN CAMPBELL, *the author of a forthcoming biography of Aneurin Bevan — the towering figure of the post-war Labour left — argues that his death 27 years ago also marked the death of British socialism*

Camera Press

'A great and wonderful man, without an equal in the Labour movement,' says Campbell — but he 'died disappointed' and 'rhetorical obeisance to his tradition debars fresh thinking'

IN THE 27 years since Nye Bevan died he has attained the status of an icon in the labour movement. There is some irony, not to say hypocrisy, in this transformation, since for most of the previous 30 years he had been bitterly at odds with the majority of the party. He was actually expelled once in 1939 and very nearly twice again in 1944 and 1955. More than anyone else he was blamed by the right and centre of the party for the rows and ructions which divided the party and had kept it from office since 1951. In 1957 he had affronted his former supporters on the left by coming out emotionally against the unilateral renunciation of the British bomb. Yet with his death in 1960 all was forgiven. It quickly became *de rigeur* at Labour conferences to quote Bevan, as it was at Tory conferences to invoke Churchill. The Mantle of Nye became the garment in which it was obligatory for Labour leaders to drape themselves in order to establish their socialism.

Three of the last four leaders have claimed this apostolic succession. (The exception, Jim Callaghan, significantly came to the leadership by the government rather than the party route.) No one was more skilful than Harold Wilson in milking for a good deal more than it was worth his shrewdly calculated resignation with Nye in 1951. Michael Foot's credentials for the leadership derived almost entirely from his standing as high priest of the cult — Nye's adopted political son, biographer and heir to Ebbw Vale. And now we have Neil Kinnock, actually brought up in Tredegar, in Bevan's constituency, in a house built by Bevan as Minister of Health, the author of a wordy 1978 introduction to a re-issue of *In Place of Fear* and the long-announced author of an as-yet-unwritten anthology, *What Nye Said*. By all these, as well as by other sentimental old Bevanites like Barbara Castle, Nye is still revered as the warm beating heart of the labour movement, the creator of the NHS and the inspiration of British socialism.

Even Tories who once reviled him as a hate-crazed demagogue who had characterised half the population as 'vermin' now retrospectively praise him as the acceptable face of the 'legitimate' old left, by contrast with the new 'hard' or 'loony' left.

But this posthumous canonisation of Bevan has been achieved at the cost of forgetting or distorting what it was, in his lifetime, that he actually stood for. In this way his life has been drained of its meaning. The guardians of his memory have chosen to remember his wit, his oratory, his overflowing humanity — in short his personality — as a cover, perhaps as a guilty apology, for continuing to bury his ideas as firmly as the party rejected them when he was alive. All his life Bevan strove to make the Labour Party a genuinely socialist party according to his own fundamentalist understanding of socialism. He failed entirely. By the time of his death it was further from being a socialist party than ever; and the fact that the leadership has subsequently passed from one of his avowed disciples to another, each piously invoking the blessed memory, has done nothing to reverse the retreat.

Socialism's hour

Nye Bevan's socialism was a comprehensive philosophy of history, the basis of which was an unwavering confidence in the inevitability of the supersession of a primitive, irrational and inefficient order of society characterised by the private ownership of property — capitalism — by a superior, rational and efficient order characterised by the collective ownership and direction of economic power. In this fundamentalist sense he was a Marxist, though a wonderfully original and idiosyncratic one. In practice his humanism kept modifying his faith in the iron laws of historical determinism.

His political realism did not expect to see the transformation of society overnight. Above all he believed passionately that in Britain the victory of the working class could be achieved peacefully through Parliament. But he never ceased to insist that the goal of socialism was a complete transformation of the economic basis of society, nor to maintain that capitalist society was evolving inexorably towards that goal. In his very last speeches in 1959 he still looked confidently to the Soviet Union, despite all the cruelty of its social system, as an example of superior economic organisation which would rapidly overtake the backward West. His socialism was essentially very simple. It was about the abolition of capitalism.

Up until about 1947 it did not seriously disturb him that so few in the higher leadership of the Labour Party shared his convictions. He was perpetually impatient at the party's timidity, and denounced it contemptuously in the columns of *Tribune*. But through all the miseries of the Depression and the rise of fascism he remained optimistic, since capitalism was so clearly in the state of collapse which his reading of history dictated. During the war he remained confident that socialism's hour was at hand, a faith which seemed to be triumphantly confirmed by Labour's great victory in 1945.

For the first two years of the Attlee government he was still buoyed up by the belief that history was on the march. Only from about 1947, as the Labour government ran out of steam — a loss of momentum pinpointed by the Cabinet's hesitation over the nationalisation of steel but more generally revealed by increasing talk of 'consolidation' — did it begin to dawn on him that history was going astray. The Labour Party, instead of pressing on towards socialism, was happy to settle for a half-baked form of welfare

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capitalism. This was the beginning of the process of disillusion that led to his quarrel with Gaitskell and his embittered resignation in 1951.

Thereafter he nursed an angry grievance against those 'New Thinkers' who were leading the party away from the path of socialism. But his anger and frustration were fuelled by a sickening, unacknowledgeable realisation that history itself had let him down. The disturbance which this unforeseen possibility created in his settled ideological firmament was the psychological basis of his unpredictable storms and tantrums in the early Fifties.

Bevan died a disappointed man, nauseated by Macmillan's 'affluent society'. The British working class, in which he had reposed such faith, had sold its birthright for the short-term gratifications of washing machines and television sets. 'History gave them the chance,' he lamented. 'They didn't take it. Now it is probably too late'. He still believed and sometimes allowed himself to say that unless socialism meant public ownership it meant nothing at all. He was appalled at the blurring of the essential philosophic divide between the parties, as Labour tried to outbid the Tories in promising merely the more efficient management of the capitalist economy.

He despised Croslandism. Yet despite his occasional explosions he had always believed that the mass Labour Party was the only possible vehicle of British socialism; he was never tempted by fringe parties like the Communists or the ILP. Even though he privately had no faith in Gaitskell's Labour Party as an instrument of his socialist ideas he served with outward loyalty as Shadow Foreign Secretary, wrestling unhappily with the moral ambiguities of nuclear weapons, and forced himself to keep quiet. There is a terrible pathos in a diary note by the journalist Geoffrey Goodman, who accompanied Bevan on his last speaking tour in the 1959 election: 'Obviously he would have liked to have had a great outburst on socialist policies . . . But he knows that if he let off the brakes he would do immense damage and might lose the election.'

Class becomes minorities

To suppress his true beliefs for fear of losing an election — though it has become the trademark of the modern Labour Party, daily urged by Neil Kinnock to observe 'self-discipline' — was contrary to everything Bevan had believed in. He was passionately a socialist, but he was equally a democrat. To him there was no contradiction, because he took it for granted that democracy would lead to socialism. Just because the working class was the majority of the country, the British electoral system furnished a weapon by which it could achieve its conquest of power smoothly and without violence. It was simply a matter of 'socialist education' to raise the workers' consciousness to the point where they would vote themselves irrevocably into power.

Bevan had lost this secure confidence in the ultimate destination of history by 1959. The enormous difference between Bevan and the new left is that they have never possessed such confidence. They have grown up since the war in a world in which socialism as Bevan understood the word was already in retreat. They have never had the expectation that socialism would be achieved simply by the majority vote of the working class. The response, therefore, of those who still look seriously to a socialist society has been to try to promote it first by manipulation of the party, in order to impose their minority view on the party machine and then, by claiming the mandate of a dubious victory under a first-past-the-post electoral system, on the country; and second by substituting for the disappointingly unsocialist mass of the working class the grievances of a scratch coalition of assorted minorities — blacks, gays, single parents and the rest — whose disparate protests against established society they lump together and call socialism. Neither in their ends nor in their means of promoting them do today's left have much in common with the confident philosophy of human progress that Bevan meant by socialism.

Still less can the right wing of the modern Labour Party properly be called socialist in Bevan's sense. They have (a) no philosophy of history, (b) no solid base in the affections or interest of the working class and (c) no serious intention of changing the property relations of society, just a short-term hope of raising the benefits of the least well-off in a society whose fundamental assumptions they do not seriously threaten.

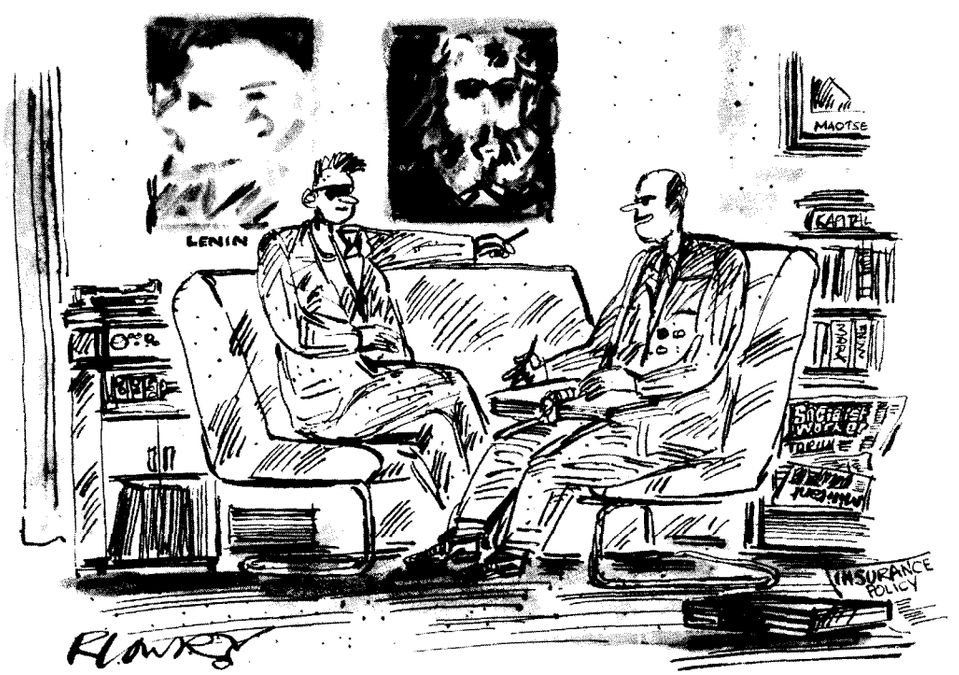
Seen from a Bevanite perspective there is not much to choose between left and right. The left are ruder to the Tories (which he would approve), but would have dismayed him by their lack of humanity and social vision; the right aspire merely to be the welfare officers of a managed capitalism. Yet the right as much as the left have felt obliged by Labour tradition to go on pretending to be what they are not, thereby crippling their appeal to the country and playing into the hands of the hard men whose methods they abhor.

This is where the Mantle of Nye has become a shirt of Nessus. The Healeys and Hattersleys, Smiths, Goulds and Kaufmans are bound to keep claiming to be good socialists — more vehemently than ever since the SDP made its break for freedom — making rhetorical obeisance to a tradition they know to be exhausted but which disbars them from genuinely fresh thinking. By pretending to be what they patently are not, they perpetuate a fraud upon the electorate which, however, the electorate now increasingly sees through. They appear duplicitous, mealy-mouthed and deeply unconvincing candidates for office, and the result is that they neither deserve nor look likely to be elected.

Tortuous attempts, like much of the *New Statesman*'s recent symposium, to redefine socialism in terms of its opposite — market forces, individualism, pluralism and consumer choice — and still call it socialism are doomed to failure. Ideas good in themselves cannot be successfully packaged in false wrapping. The Labour right and the many intelligent politicians still trapped within it would do better to admit the casuistry of their enterprises, recognise that socialism was a tide of history that never came to flood and begin again.

Nye Bevan was a great and wonderful man, without an equal in the history of the labour movement. If anyone could have converted the British to socialism it was Bevan, 40 years ago. In fact even he, with all his oratory and faith, never came near it. His pale successors, invoking his shade but lacking his conviction, only disable themselves from making an honest contribution to solving the social problems of the 1980s by trying to flog an historical anachronism back to life. Nye Bevan is 27 years dead, and the dream of British socialism a receding and delusive mirage. □

John Campbell's book, Nye Bevan and the Mirage of British Socialism, *was published on 26 March by Weidenfeld & Nicolson at £15.95.*



'Of course, we prefer to say **if** *capitalism collapses, rather than* **when** *capitalism collapses; but if capitalism collapses, sir, that will affect your annuities like this . . .'*

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ARTS

ART

Virgin and goddesses

John Spurling

From Byzantium to El Greco
RA
Liliane Lijn
Fischer Fine Art, 30 King Street, London SW1
until 3 April

'The Adoration of the Magi' at the Royal Academy

THE TOP GALLERY of the RA is usually rather a dreary space. However, for the new exhibition of Byzantine frescoes and icons from Greece, **From Byzantium to El Greco**, it has been cunningly transformed by Jasper Jacob Associates into a pseudo-church, with embrasures and side-chapels and down the centre a procession of glass cases containing the large and usually double-sided icons which were once carried in religious processions. Except for the paintings themselves, with their brilliant gold backgrounds and splashes of strong red and blue, the whole place is black.

We have perhaps got used to the idea that early Italian Christian paintings are now, as it were, deconsecrated: to be venerated purely as works of art rather than religious objects. But Byzantine icons — more primitive, more stereotyped and less familiar on the walls of museums — still carry much of their original context with them. Gibbon, not surprisingly, had an aversion to them: 'These Catholic images were faintly and flatly delineated by monkish artists in the last degeneracy of taste and genius.' He adds a note about the 'ignorance and bigotry' of a Greek priest who ordered some pictures from Titian and, when he saw them, sent them straight back, complaining that 'your scandalous figures stand quite out from the canvas: they are as bad as a group of statues'. The paintings in this exhibition are indeed, like Noël Coward's Norfolk, very flat. They are also, to the untrained eye, somewhat repetitive; distinctly austere, for all their colours; and quite lacking in humour, except unconsciously, as when St George, riding back after one of his miracles, carries on his crupper a tiny lad (a Christian slave rescued from the Saracens) who is still holding in one hand the full wine glass he was about to serve at his heathen masters' table.

But they're in no way degenerate. On the contrary, it is their sense of conviction and still powerful ideology that makes them disturbing. People did actually worship these things, believed them capable of healing sickness, of winning battles,of preserving cities from being sacked by the Saracens. These gloomy Madonnas, tight-lipped saints and suffering or authoritarian Christs in rigid poses carry the viewer into a world, a history, a frame of mind which are as outlandish and near-nightmarish as, say, Stalinist Russia, fundamentalist Islam or Maoist China. However un-Christian the West may now have become, it is still difficult for those born into it not to take Christianity for granted and treat it as if it were a civilised norm. Looking at these unreconstructed, unsoftened Christian images gives one a new objectivity. They are often beautiful, but — in spite of the several versions of the so-called 'Glykophilousa' or 'sweetly-loving' Virgin Mary, with her cheek pressed against her baby's — far more barbaric and inhumane than the pagan art of classical Greece. This surely was what Gibbon really disliked about them.

The later part of the exhibition is dominated by paintings from Crete, where many of the artists took refuge after the fall of Constantinople in 1453. These paintings, more sophisticated and idiosyncratic than the earlier ones and influenced by Italian Renaissance painting — Crete was by then part of the Venetian empire — are also more comfortable to be with. Several are signed by the artists or can be attributed to known names: Michael Damaskinos, Emmanuel Lambardos and, by reputation if not by demonstration here, the star of the show, Domenikos Theotokopoulos, known to the vulgar as 'El Greco'. The people of the island of Syros, unmoved by the pleas of their Archbishop or of the Archaeological Commission of Greece, have refused to lend their recently discovered early Theotokopoulos — *The Dormition of the Virgin* — and thus apparently robbed the RA of its prime exhibit. But, in fact, if there is a degenerate element here, it is El Greco. His work, even this early, is far too Italianate, not nearly flat or hieratic enough. To judge by its reproduction in the catalogue, *The Dormition* belongs more to our modern world of artistic veneration than to that distant Byzantium which, as Yeats has it, 'disdains all that man is'.

'The Virgin Mary,' writes **Liliane Lijn** in the catalogue to her exhibition at Fischer Fine Art, 'epitomises western man's physical and spiritual castration of woman . . . She has conceived the Son of God but there has been no union, no carnal love, no dalliance, no play of powers, no sex.' The centrepiece of Lijn's show is a pair of extraordinary goddesses suggesting female archetypes of a rather more complex and vital kind.

Simply to list their materials may convey some notion of their strangeness: painted steel and aluminium, glass prisms, aluminium mesh, synthetic fibres (the kind used for car-wash brushes), an electronic sound-to-light system, an audio machine, a five-milliwatt helium laser, a smoke machine and a computer. Across a darkened space they engage in a brief, fully-automated dialogue. Opening her black, shiny, folded wings to reveal yellow, black and red plumage, the nearly nine-foot-high, long-legged, jut-bottomed *Woman of War* chants a semi-aggressive, semi-seductive song which activates points of coloured light all amongst the slightly shorter and squatter *Lady of the Wild Things*' chest, a permanent spread of red and blue plumage. Then a laser beam shoots from the

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former's head, strikes the latter's head (consisting of a prism) and is bounced back and down through a sudden eruption of smoke around *Woman of War*'s feet. Lijn may call them goddesses, but the effect is wholly irreligious. Far from reducing humanity to a sense of its insignificance and ineptitude, these assertively woman-made automata declare the desire and capacity of our species (female or male) to create myths in its own image. □

TELEVISION

God's eye view

Hugo Williams

LUCKILY, EDWARD FOX didn't agree with Harold Pinter that his character of St John Quartermaine in Simon Gray's **Quartermaine's Terms** (BBC2) was someone who 'actually cared how other people were feeling', or that 'such men are rare nowadays'. 'I *suppose* it's true,' he said doubtfully in the *Radio Times*, sensing a sure road to dullness. I didn't see the stage production, but I bet Pinter told him that in order to get an even more sincerely insincere performance out of him and his weird speaking voice.

I wonder, did he change it much for this highly entertaining TV version, directed by Bill Hays? His courteously vague and vaguely indifferent failed English teacher in a failing English-for-foreigners school in Cambridge in 1962 was a horrifyingly familiar description of a man who has let out his body to go through the motions of earning a living for him, while he gets on with the business of dying. He is a sympathetic chap, but even his most earnest expressions of sympathy seem to get left behind on his face from lack of upkeep, their meaning, like the meaning of life, forgotten or formalised out of existence. Even his accent, that unearthly construct out of *Edward and Mrs Simpson*, a sort of slurred music hall major hauled along by pleading little smiles, seems designed to ingratiate itself with his colleagues on some impossibly formal level of intimacy, while sparing him any further involvement. It was his casting against type that was partially to thank for the strength of his performance, or the casting of his accent perhaps. How tempting to put an old duffer in here: Fox's swish hair and lively waistcoats only emphasised his leftover life to live in this home for failed novelists, martyred spinsters and hen-pecked husbands that was so like our own dear world in aspic.

Simon Gray is now even more horribly reliable than Alan Ayckbourn for nerveless character assassination by phrase and insinuation — suicide rather, for he barely has to lift his pen against his characters to have us squirming with (self) disgust at our race of cowards, bores and hypocrites. The beauty of his rotten-to-the-core institutional setting is that here, as in England generally, nearly everyone has taken to slipping off early before the bell and absolutely *no one's* heart is in it, so the gloves are firmly off and the punches are all thrillingly below the belt. 'The students are very interesting, coming as they do from every corner of the globe, so to speak,' says the feathery old duster who owns the set-up (John Gielgud). He is all of a dither because the Turks have failed to make conventional use of the bathroom again. 'Sheffield?' asks the academic tutor who specialises in 'well, more less everything'. 'Oh, I know it well. Clare and I went there the year before Susan was born to look at out-of-the-way domestic architecture.'

I'm not sure if it speaks kindly of my nature that I laughed in sadistic glee at nearly every line of this X-ray and lie-detector of a play, or for that of humanity for that matter, but that is the way it has to be done, as Mr Punch rightly points out. I can only ask that Gray's neglected *The Common Pursuit*, also directed by Pinter when it failed to transfer to the West End, will be given the TV update. After *After Pilkington* and this, it begins to look as though telly is Gray's spiritual home, poor chap.

There can be little danger of heavy-handedness in fiction while the real world contains cartoons like cultural leader Bob Guccione, 'editor' of the toss-off glossy *Penthouse*. Guc, dripping medallions and powering away on a throne like Peter Ustinov as the Emperor Nero waiting for his bowels to heave, was appearing on an incomprehensible collage about Catholicism and Art on **Arena** (BBC2) called *How Do You Solve a Problem like Maria*?

How do you solve a problem like Bob? might have been a better question. Is Guc a Roman Catholic as well as a Roman Emperor? We witnessed him ogling flesh-slides with a jeweller's glass crammed in his mad eye and heard the words: 'If one has a talent, it is a kind of divine gift and to ignore it would be criminal, almost sacrilegious.' Alas, Guc is a man beyond the help of character assassination, however radical. We'll just have to keep him sedated with flesh-tones and gold medallions until Rome finally burns.

Can you blame Simon Dee, recalled from the wilderness to talk to Joan Bakewell on **Did You See?** (BBC2) about his four-year trajectory in the late Sixties when he had a nightly audience for his chat show *Dee Time* of 16 million (more than twice that of *Wogan*) for finding modern television 'common'? It's a word that needs rehabilitating around here.

Is **World Bowls** (BBC2) what God plays, I wonder? When you first switch on by accident to this imperceptible sporting activity, you think it is World Snooker photographed from a funny, possibly drunk, angle. You're right, of course, but you get a nasty fright when a tiny bald person with an outsize tape measure steps onto the green baize. Is it a Hobbit? No, this isn't Middle Earth or the DTs, it's The Midland Bank World Indoor Pairs Championship, even if they *don't* know about it in Nicaragua. It just so happens that England is playing Wales, not North Korea, so the match is handily set in Bournemouth, where it is causing heart attacks of imperceptible excitement. Appropriately, and respectfully, the balls, or bowls, move at barely promenade pace across the astro-turf, curving gently towards their final destinations like palsied old step-takers with their gyroscopes missing. Their minders, in pairs, trot nervously after them with their necks held out at odd angles, as if to steer their charges home by efforts of the will. An inset-shot of the opposition proves that World Bowls men, like God, are above or beyond anything so prejudicial as a reaction to what is going on down there below. □

CINEMA

Seek and hide

Simon Cunliffe

Fatherland (15)
ICA and nationwide
Personal Services (18)
Plaza 1; Cannons Shaftesbury Ave, Fulham Road, Edgware Road; Screen on the Green

IN HIS RECENT essay 'How do we feed the pagodas?' (*NS* 20 March), Terry Eagleton identifies a central dilemma for radical art: 'how to be at once popular and experimental, undermine "realist" (i.e. ruling-class) ways of seeing and yet remain widely available.' While the conflation of 'realist' with 'ruling-class' should be treated with circumspection, this is, and has been, a pertinent dilemma for radical filmmakers. For Eagleton's general thesis hinges on the commodification of art under capitalism, and the cinema, a particularly capital-intensive 'art form', is especially prone to its priorities.

Ken Loach is regarded by many as one of this country's foremost oppositional filmmakers. Ironically, perhaps, 'realism' has been his stock-in-trade. His latest film, **Fatherland**, is a collaboration with playwright Trevor Griffiths. At most it is a brilliant tightrope act, boldly straddling the horns of Eagleton's dilemma; at the least, an intelligent and determined rearguard action, issued in the face of Thatcherism's fast-encroaching status quo.

Klaus Dritteman is a *Liedermacher* — a musician who sings political songs — expelled from the GDR for his opposition to the Stalinist regime. A reluctant refugee in West Berlin, his concerns are twofold: his future as a political artist and the fate of his father, a classical musician similarly exiled many years previously. He is courted by Herr Braun's 'progressive' Taube Records. He is guest of honour at decadent parties; the focus of a press conference attended by the Culture Minister. He is under pressure to sign a recording contract. Dritteman, however, is not so easily seduced. 'Forgive my naiveté, Herr Braun. Knowing how to behave as a commodity isn't innate, you know.'

The search for his father is expedited by the arrival of a young French journalist, Emma. She wants to do a story on the two of them. Dritteman takes up her offer of assistance. They locate the old man in England where Klaus learns that Emma is something other than she admits; and that his father, too, has his secrets.

Fatherland's central device is the location of its political ideas within the familiar conventions of certain genres, notably the thriller and road movie. It shares the point of view of an astute, though in certain respects 'innocent', central character seeing and experiencing the West for the first time as he searches for his mysterious father. He observes that Stalinism does not hold sole proprietary rights over 'oppression'. In the West, too, there is censorship and authoritarian repression — a truncated call on a radio talk-back show, the harrassment of a van load of pickets by police — neatly realised in two brief vignettes as

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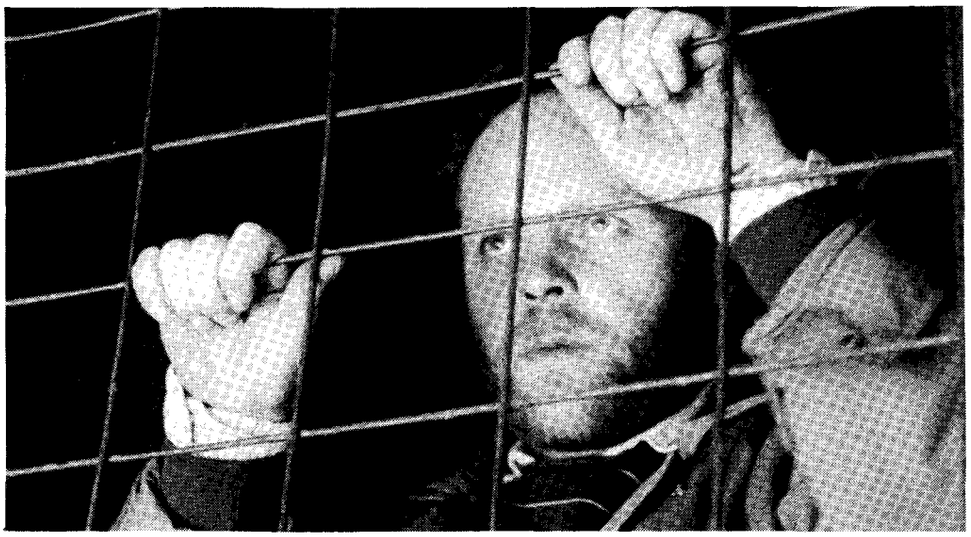

No escape for Klaus Dritteman (Gerulf Pannach) in *Fatherland*

Klaus and Emma travel towards Cambridge. There is unemployment. There are surveillance agencies.

Ultimately, however, *Fatherland* is not bounded by genre conventions; nor does it adhere to mainstream cinema's classic realist model — a form of representation which denies its own artifice, offering itself for our consumption as 'natural' and 'true'. Central to that artifice is the narrative's inexorable and seamless progress towards resolution whereby the problems it initially raised will be solved. In this case, primarily, where is Dritteman's father? What is his story? And will Klaus Dritteman be able to work in the West?

But here that progress is persistently interrupted and delayed; thwarted; sidetracked by inter-titles — *Stalinism is not Socialism, Capitalism is not Freedom* — by Dritteman's songs; by inserts of black-and-white footage; by Dritteman's nightmares, memories, fears and visions. The film itself becomes a journey, rather than simply a destination.

Paradoxically, aspects of Loach's 'realism' similarly interfere: his casting, for instance. Gerulf Pannach, who plays Dritteman, is in fact a political singer exiled from the GDR. Fabienne Babe, whose command of the English script is at times halting and muffled, plays the young journalist. The 'authenticity' of their performances exceeds the requirements of classic realism. And, while Chris Menges' cinematography is crisp, often stunning in its clarity, he has resisted lighting for 'moody' shadows, and 'atmospheric' filter-enhanced images.

This disruptive effect is amplified by Griffith's incisive script, which services a political critique as much as it does the film's narrative requirements. At times its lyrical power has the movie soaring free of its genre constraints: 'met her in Spain you know, Rosa, red red Rosa, in the full . . . obscene bloom of her innocence, "wading through slaughter like Stalin's daugher",' recounts Dritteman the elder, about his wife, to the son he does not recognise.

Fatherland's sophistication must raise some questions about its general accessibility. Partly financed by Channel 4, it may have to wait for its television screening to achieve the sort of audience it deserves. But this should not obscure the fact that it is an absorbing example of contemporary, oppositional cinema.

If advance publicity counts for anything, **Personal Services** should not lack an audience. This is the 'fictional' movie inspired by the exploits of Cynthia Payne — Madam Cyn as the tabloids have dubbed her. Christine Painter, played by Julie Walters, is a waitress in a South London café who falls into prostitution more by accident than design. Conventional in form, the film nevertheless contains its own little subversions. Women talking about men and sex from a position of power — however temporary or incomplete — is one of them. At times this is a very funny film. A friend once told me that, as a schoolboy, whenever accosted by someone in authority, he would counter the intimidation by imagining his persecutor sitting upon the loo. When Christine finally faces judgment, she finds that she can do a lot better than that. □

Simon Cunliffe is replacing Judith Williamson for a couple of weeks.

THEATRE

Cash, bang, wallop

Victoria Radin

Serious Money
CARYL CHURCHILL *Royal Court*
Yerma
LORCA *Cottesloe*
Six Characters in Search of an Author
PIRANDELLO *Olivier*

COMING INTO the Royal Court to see **Serious Money** I was crushed against a wall by a large gentleman who evidently saw no reason why my presence should impede his progress towards his chosen destination. The episode served as a fitting introduction to Caryl Churchill's new comedy, whose subject is the Big Bang in the City but whose real theme is the naked ruthlessness and greed that characterises much of life in Britain in the late 1980s. The 20 characters (played by eight actors) steal, cheat, lie and vigorously trample down anyone who stands in their way. 'Greed has been good to me,' enthuses a young whizzkid. The tone is hectic and exuberant, and the audience responds in kind. At the end of the first half, when the cast hissed out a rapping song whose words, written by Ian Dury, were largely a list of expletives, we all reacted as if we'd heard music from paradise.

Churchill is not out to instruct. The terms 'corporate raider' 'leveraged buy-out' and 'junk bond', despite the fact that I've now watched people being, doing or buying these things for two hours, remain as gnomic as ever; and I wouldn't be able to explain the finer points of such plot as there is. Basically there are two of them. One concerns the death of Jake who has been amassing a fortune, or what I do now understand to be 'serious' money, by shopping inside information to a very hard lady in New York called Mary-Lou. His sister embarks on a mission to discover the real facts behind his death — though much more from desire to lay hands on his money than out of feelings of family piety, which the play reveals to be universally extinct. At the same time, this Scilla, daughter of a stockbroker, is involved in a conspiracy to buy up a 'good, old-fashioned' Northern firm called Albion, no less. This scam is masterminded by Billy Corman, a drop-out from a CSE metalwork course whom Scilla's father describes as an 'Oik', or 'one of those barrow boys you expect to see on a street corner selling cheap watches'. Gary Oldman, sporting greasy hair and a shady moustache, plays him with a limp arm that hints at Richard III.

Churchill doesn't make the mistake of thinking Corman is any worse than the representatives of older money, whom she shows to be every bit as ruthless; nor of believing that integrity ruled before the Bang released naked greed in its most incontrovertible forms. Her curtain-raising scene lifted from Thomas Shadwell shows Restoration pillars of the establishment merrily dreaming up trading chicaneries and a playwright rejoicing in it. Churchill rejoices in it too; and has a good time at peppering her play with awful puns, rhyming

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THE MOST GLORIOUS, LIFE-ENHANCING PLAY IN LONDON'
LONDON DAILY NEWS
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couplets and theatrical in-jokes. I could have done without some of these sallies, and with more of the rhyming, which tends, like the dynamic of the piece, to die out in the second half. And the couplets, which seemed so marvellous when they were flying at one like the bubbles in a glass of champagne (a drink that Corman calls 'poo', as in 'a glass of poo') look fairly dismal when one reads over one's notes the next day. I don't think this is a lasting work, but its quality of cheap immediacy, an inky newness like this morning's tabloid, gives it a freshness one rarely sees in the theatre: it feels as if it had been written today.

Max Stafford-Clark does wonders with the directing: a riding scene and the two songs which end each half are beautifully choreographed, and the whole evening proceeds — on Peter Harwell's two-levelled set which suggests Rome, Egypt and the Globe Theatre all at once — with maximum speed and efficiency. The acting — from Linda Bassett in her dual roles as a devious English stockbroker and an outfront ruthless American arbitrageur (whatever that is, though it's clear that the Americans are better at it); Alfred Molina as a New York-Jewish banker who casually orders a flock of tropical birds from Harrods to clinch a friendship; Meera Syal as a be-furred Peruvian lady prepared to dump her copper mines and get into cocaine ('Pictures of starving babies are misleading. Only the masses are poor.'); Lesley Manville as both the Sloaney Scilla and a brisk Northern 'white knight'; Allan Corduner in a series of finely-tuned portraits of bastards ranging from a smoothy Cabinet Minister to the semi-wicked Chairman of the threatened Albion; Burt Caesar as a fake African prince and an American personal assistant and Julian Wadham as both the murdered wheeler-dealer and the tweedier double who informs on him — all give perfectly balanced and intensely attractive performances in one of the most enjoyable evenings I've spent at the Court in some time. Greed has been good to the whole company.

At the Cottesloe Theatre, **Yerma**, Lorca's meditation on the theme of female fecundity and the tragic consequences of its denial, proves rather intractable to Di Trevis' company. Here is a lot of intelligent work, a lot of effortful adaptation — but I never could forget the intelligence and the effort, nor the stubborn Englishness of the enterprise. Juliet Stevenson, so good at playing women in whom passion and probity run in equal measure, never convinced me as the peasant woman who is all passion; nor the lanky and thoughtful-featured Roger Lloyd Pack, whom I last saw playing Kafka, as her simple shepherd husband. There is a telling moment when he lets his arms hang limply by his side as she embraces him: she picks one of them up and puts it round her. The gesture seemed to sum up the futility of her febrile pleas for any kind of love.

Recent attempts to play the illusion v. reality game — Stoppard's *The Real Thing* or Hare's *Map of the World* — seem woefully inadequate beside Pirandello's unbeatable masterpiece of the genre. Michael Rudman's production of **Six Characters in Search of an Author**, in a new version by Nicholas Wright which cleverly supposes that the company is rehearsing *Hamlet*, is passionate as well as intellectually satisfying. Its costumes, by Lindy Hemmings, also happen to be the best in London. □

WORK IN PROGRESS

Soap in our eyes

Naseem Khan

HOW, DO YOU THINK, would *EastEnders*, *Brookside* or *Crossroads* go down if they were shown to audiences in Manila, Manitoba or Madras? What sort of values would be perceived? Can soap opera travel? With the threat of satellite not far off — when the confluence of hundreds of new channels will make it unnecessary for any of us to go out of the house for entertainment again — the Commonwealth Institute's four-week showing of Commonwealth soaps (due to end on Saturday) was timely.

With a bit of effort one should, in theory, be able to 'read' soaps. They should be as sure a way in to the prejudices, myths and aspirations of a society as folk tales. The Canadian soaps which began the Institute show provided, however, contradictory images. Chosen and presented by Margaret Lyons, CBC's London Director, they came from three different series and were variously homely, streetwise-glossy and downright unpleasant. It would be hard to hate *Danger Bay*, a kindly, primetime soap aimed at the family market. Life in Canada looks lovely here. Brad, a marine biologist with an attractive teenage family — all nice smiles and malted milk — but, for unspecified reasons, no wife, spends his working time in superb countryside and, while not working, in a house for which I'd give my eyeteeth. The sample episode had mild troubles brewing for Brad. His son Jonah had set his heart on a father-and-son boat trip because 'we're not connecting too well at present' and was cheesed-off when his father invited a handicapped friend to go with them. But everything turned out for the best: Jonah was caught in a poacher's otter trap, having gone sulking off on his own, and the tide was coming slowly in when the two adults, in a notable cliffhanger, both rescued him and duffed up the poachers. Jonah got to talk to his dad: what should he do about a girl he fancies? 'Kiss her,' advised his dad, in a nice old-fashioned way.

A newer Canadian soap, *Street Legal*, shows another Canadian self-image. Jazzier and urban, its credits immediately underline its difference: fast, bright, ad images — hurrying feet on pavements, neon signs, multiracial faces — to a driving rock beat, 'You gotta move'. Here, unlike in *Danger Bay*, the women are the movers. The series is set in a storefront law firm in what would be called a 'mixed neighbourhood' and, in the episode shown, tackled the issues both of multiracialism and obdurate bureaucracy in a racy thriller-type format. A young woman lawyer took on the case of an Argentinian illegal immigrant. At the same time, her stuffed-shirt colleague was bounced into taking the case of a folksy Jamaican patty-seller protesting at regulations demanding he call his patty a 'pie'. Violence, for a time, seemed inevitable, but was eschewed. (There is, said Ms Lyons, a conscious disavowal in public service broadcasting of violence.) In the end, the baddy was not only defeated but also unmanned; and even the pattyman won. Given the official line on violence, the third soap, *He Shoots, He Scores*, came as a surprise. Originally made in French (and viewed weekly by 73 per cent of Canada's French speakers), it had been none too happily dubbed into English. It features that object of Canadian adoration, the ice hockey team, and is devoted to the ethic of Win, Come What May.

The sample episode dwelt on the play-offs before the prestigious Stanley Cup and followed the fluctuating fortunes of the team, The Nationals, from game to game. 'I wanna see a massacre out there!' demanded the tyrant manager in the pre-match harangue. The team growled, roared like buffaloes in dutiful wordless response, ritually smashed an ice-hockey stick to pulp and erupted onto the ice. 'Let's go out there and beat those mothers!' And massacre it was. They tottered back, shoulders dislocated (but refusing to retire), battered and held together only by elastic bandages. And, when they looked beaten in spirit, the manager wheeled in his handicapped son 'Walk!' he demanded. The child fearfully levered himself out of his wheelchair — utter silence — and walked. The team, helped by a background song — 'You keep on trying, it's not easy . . .' — went out again and won. Violence, or honest reportage? These things happen, insisted Ms Lyons later. And it is true that the massacres of *He Shoots, He Scores* are oddly neutral, like sports footage. Unlike in American products, there is no gloating, no aesthetic of violence. It's boys' own stuff. By far more objectionable is the authoritarian, tribal hysteria for the win.

In a sense, *He Shoots, He Scores* is an ingenious means of fighting the series pouring out of Canada's large neighbour without quite playing America's game. For Canada's major problem is maintaining control over its own identity. 'We've never been independent culturally,' said Ms Lyons. 'We went from being a British colony to being an American cultural colony.' Television is an important weapon in the war of independence — but not, alas, a rich weapon. Only five per cent of the country's entertainment programming is domestically made.

Cultural imperialism is not a problem limited to those with powerful neighbours. It is not an unknown condition here, with the importation of American series that have changed what we ask of television. Satellite will add to the problem, which is why Canada's experience is noteworthy. Ms Lyons herself was by no means certain that the thrust of the Peacock Report, with its assumption that the consumer should be king, was correct; diversity and minority interests would be likely to disappear. If the function of public services broadcasting is, as Canada believes, to affirm a national identity — and, in their case, a multicultural one — then a conscious degree of protectionism, without sliding into authoritarian social engineering, was, she believed, inevitable. Market forces, even in soaps, are not enough. □

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Books

Mike Abrahams/Network

Conservative Party Conference, Brighton 1984

TORY WOMEN

Bend with the wind

Julia Langdon

The Iron Ladies: Why Do Women Vote Tory?
BEATRIX CAMPBELL *Virago* £4.95

THINK OF THE ARCHETYPAL Tory woman and you will probably come up with some coiffured creature in twinset and pearls, sensible shoes, carrying a handbag with handles; someone, in fact, very like Mrs Thatcher. Well, this book shows how wrong you would be. As Bea Campbell explains: 'The Conservative Party is about nothing if not about power: the power of men. Their power has been nursed by the most powerful courts, clubs and corporations in Britain — and by women; it is through the work of women that men have secured their popular base.'

It will be obvious that Mrs Thatcher does not conform to the role model of the classic Conservative. This is defined here as ministering to the men who possess the power: women are the mothers or the wives or the mistresses; they have the power to give life, to nurture it, but they also practise what the author calls the 'self-denying qualities of femininity which support the power of others'.

The women who have broken out of this type-casting shine through the pages of the book. Mrs Thatcher is the most obvious, but there are other examples. Take the case of Lady Olga Maitland. She ought to be another classic Tory: an Earl's daughter wit' a voice to set a crystal chandelier tinkling; a ge' ne aristo with views to match. Yet, despite her ou andingly successful campaign — in propaganda terms, that is — she is mocked and derided by the Tories of the political establishment. Although she has, at last, secured a seat to fight at the next election — which, one might presume, is the real motive of her mission — it seems a little harsh that it should be slap in the middle of the East End of London. Lady Olga's problem, of course, is that her kind of activity is not the sort of thing that Tory ladies — particularly aristos — ought to get up to in any spare time they may have from writing or appearing in gossip columns. She explains in the book that it was because she came up against 'that terrible term "one doesn't" and "that's not the way we do it."'

And then, of course, there is Sara Keays. It is not clear whether she gave an interview for this book in the belief that it might be nicely timed to scupper the next Cabinet reshuffle. But here she is again, putting her case, pointing out that she had been prepared to subordinate her career to Cecil Parkinson's until his downfall when her career was also ended. 'The party refused to have anything to do with me and have never given me any reason for taking me off the candidates' list . . . It was acceptable for my career to be destroyed,' she says. As Bea Campbell points out, with some justification, what became represented as the wrath of a wronged woman was actually only a wronged woman refusing to be a victim.

These then are the untypical cases. But, although this book purports to be about why women vote Tory, it is far more an analysis of the role of women in the party over the last century. That partly provides the answer as to why the Conservatives are electorally attractive to women and is historically interesting.

Campbell shows that from the very earliest days of their involvement in politics women voluntarily subordinated their position to their menfolk. Indeed, in the Primrose League — the very womb of all political organisation within the Conservative Party — the suggestion that either the Dames or the ordinary members in the habitations might sully themselves with actual political activity was considered outrageous. They not only left all that to the men, they even isolated themselves from the activities of the early women suffragists.

Yet there was an element of the subsequent success of the Conservative women's organisation to be found here — for that very reason. While Labour women and suffragists challenged the orthodoxy and lost, and then lost again, Conservative women preserved their femininity and their own hallowed positions within their homes and actually increased their power in doing so. Far from being impotent, Campbell points out, it could be argued that these women retained power by bowing to constraints, for the very reason that they did not challenge anyone or anything and so did not invite defeat.

That perhaps is why it was a Tory woman, Viscountess Nancy Astor, who was the first woman actually to sit in Parliament and why it was Margaret Thatcher who was the first woman to lead a political party in Britain and the first woman Prime Minister. Conservative women's politics are, according to Bea Campbell, a tactical calculation of the limits of challenge. And that, alas, is perhaps why women vote Tory. □

Julia Langdon is Political Editor of the London Daily News.

READING

Alphabet of dreams

Liz Heron

The Literature Machine
ITALO CALVINO trans. PATRICK CREAGH *Secker* £16

MID-WAY THROUGH this collection comes an essay entitled 'Why Read the Classics?' In it

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Calvino proposes 14 definitions of 'a classic', a list which explains, revises and elaborates on its individual components and ends with a characteristically perverse refusal to be conclusive, to deny other possibilities or reasons.

With equally characteristic grace, it eases the book's transition from the wider reaches of literary theory to a close focus on individual books and writers. Not only are they all classics, in one or more of Calvino's terms, but they are among his own classics, in the personal sense he has described — so that 'Why Read the Classics?' distinguishes Calvino the writer and Calvino the reader, each organically present in the other, in a constant dialectic of renewal and change.

It's one of the many joys of *The Literature Machine* that the reader, always a crucial player in Calvino's literary game, gets to watch the writer also as reader, though at one further remove. That the game is serious is never in doubt, however playful, however feather-light its motions. In Calvino's fictions, the narrative gymnastics, the comic irony, the enchantments of fantasy and the charm of paradox all perform exquisitely precise manoeuvres in that area 'between the lightness of ideas and the heavy weight of the world' that he refers to in an essay on 'Philosophy and Literature'. For Calvino these two ways of looking form a triangle with science; each always calling the others into question while pursuing distinct and overlapping inquiries.

If we can read this collection as a source-book for his influences — like Ariosto's epic of comic marvels *Orlando Furioso*, whose palace of illusions floats in the same imaginary zone as *Invisible Cities* and whose woman-warrior Bradamante turns up in *The Nonexistent Knight* — these are something other than ancestral debts. There's a comman impulse to cosmography, to mapping other worlds that are both exact in the logic of their possibilities yet rich in the wildness of their fancies. It's there in Pliny — whose idea of nature, 'scientific' but also allegory, symbol and emblem, Calvino hails as 'the alphabet of dreams, the code book of the imagination' — and Cyrano de Bergerac, whose philosophically daring space fictions reached towards modern science, while spawning moonfolk with vegan ethics and others who tell the time by the shadow their noses cast on their teeth.

Though these essays bridge some 15 years — up to 1982 — Calvino's intellectual consistency deepens their separate perceptions. In 'Right and Wrong Political Uses of Literature', he describes the Sixties (that decade yet to bear the full brunt of cynicism, with next year's anniversaries) as bringing 'a revolution of the mind, an intellectual turning point'. Exploring the crises in Italian literature after this whirlwind dispersal of multiple established categories, he arrives at a complex appraisal of ideas about the relationship between politics and literature. It combines a generous clarity and commitment with the most trenchant warnings.

He rejects any claim 'that literature should voice a truth already possessed by politics', any conception of it as an ornamental adjunct to a fixed and self-confident politics. Nor should it be viewed as 'an assortment of eternal human sentiments, as the truth of a human language that politics tends to overlook'. Once assigned an area of humanity all its own, literature assumes the conservative function of consolation and preservation.

It is in giving a voice and a name to whatever lacks these that literature becomes necessary to politics, and most of all to what the language of politics excludes or represses. It is in exploring the unexplored and creating patterns of language, of vision, of imagination, that the writer may offer new models of values essential to political action and awareness in an infinitely complex world.

These same principles animate an earlier essay on the question of 'Whom Do We Write For?'. Its answer, founded on the knowledge that literature can never guarantee a single truth or meaning once released from the author's hold, posits a book that will always take its place beside other books, and a reader always more cultured than the writer — 'Literature has no choice but to raise the stakes . . .'

After he left the Communist Party in 1957, Calvino's fundamental radicalism of outlook coexisted increasingly with a deep pessimism about politics and political programmes, amply expressed here. Yet just as he commends Voltaire's *Candide* for the picaresque momentum that contradicts its ghastly chronicle, and for the usually unrecognised radicalism of its famous dictum — asserting that change depends on human effort rather than transcendental forces — so Calvino's writing gathers its own optimism. With its tender recognitions of human vulnerability and human potential, its textural openness and tantalising leaps of perception, its intellectual piquancy, it always lifts the spirits towards life and the future.

Indeed utopias have a special importance for him (Fourier get three essays); not as blueprints, but as exhaustive systems that can help make sense of reality — as a means of finding an escape route from what surrounds and defines us: 'we have only to identify the point where the imagined fortress does not coincide with the real one and then find it' says the Edmond Dantès of his own story about the *Count of Monte Cristo*. The dream of a new science for every object, quoted from Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida*, matches Calvino's own project of infinite cosmographies — of possible worlds and worlds whose seeds lie in the impossible.

The relatively recent fact of his death and the continuing arrival of his work in English makes it hard to think of Calvino in the past tense. But there are other reasons. *The Literature Machine* reminds us that he is a great writer, a classic writer (in many senses) who will go on inspiring vital new understandings — not least of that slogan from 1968 that defined realism as an aspiration to the impossible. □

Light and shade

John Gurney

At the entrance to the psychiatric
clinic hangs this reproduction painting
straight from 'Boots'. It has diaphanous thick
shafts of coloured light, each infiltrating
a transparent German church. It is like
a type B peak experience once described
by Maslow, and it always seems to strike
my eyes like some celestial form ascribed
to angels. When I move left to the toilet
the mood grows less translucent, for its door
is postered with a smoking cigarette
that leaks dark tar. Graffiti overscore
the viscous mess. Black words shout urgently:
'Your brains, when they have finished E.C.T.!'

SHORT STORIES

Heaven and hell

Alison Fell

He Rau Aroha — A Hundred Leaves of Love
APIRANA TAYLOR *Penguin* £2.95
Te Kaihau — The Windeater
KERI HULME *Hodder* £10.95
Drunk with Love
ELLEN GILCHRIST *Faber* £9.95
The Setting Sun and the Rolling World
CHARLES MUNGOSHI *Heinemann* £10.95
The Night Walk and Other Stories
EDWARD UPWARD *Heinemann* £10.95

IN HIS VIVID FIRST collection **He Rau Aroha**, young New Zealand writer Apirana Taylor shows that he is equally at home with myths of place and ancestry as with the raw realities of Maori life. In 'Hera' the obstinate struggle of an old woman eel-fisher with the last and biggest eel of her life takes on a metaphysical edge, while the artist in 'The Carving' realises that the integrity of his vision will only be satisfied when the proud ancestral warrior he has set out to sculpt is mutilated and distorted. Idealisation can even damage the health, as in 'The Rubbish Tin', where a neglected little girl feeds her doll three conscientious meals a day, as she learned when in care, and, locked out in the rain, waits trustingly in the garbage can for her alcoholic mother to return.

In the background the Pakeha (whites) are always there — amiably racist over beer and pool, or self-congratulatory about the advantages of a good Maori wife. Kindness, when it comes, is surprising — as in 'Fish Heads' where, if the fishmonger refuses to sell his scraps to the two workmen, it's only because he wants to give them away instead.

Taylor can be hilarious at the expense of mankind of any colour. In 'Bye Bye Billy' a dedicated sensualist dies from simultaneously smoking a joint, driving a car, drinking whisky, being fellated and eating a chicken leg. And, in the ballad 'He Korero', we watch through the eyes of a spider and an ant as a man casually pees on them, then puts a straw up frogs' anuses and blows till they explode. The bewildered insects grope for the meaning of it all. Perhaps the only purpose of humanity is to 'Come up, make toilet, kill frogs, and walk down the forever trail'?

You'd imagine that Keri Hulme with her mixed Celtic and Maori ancestry would have the best of both mythological worlds. But, while the resonance of *The Bone People* shows here and there in **Te Kaihau — The Windeater**, the stories lack that sheer commitment to a theme which drove the novel on through some self-indulgent writing. Hulme's New Zealand is essentially more

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inscrutable than Taylor's. In her land of volcanoes and rainbows the sea is everywhere, both isolating the characters and extending them into poetry or a yearning identification with other creatures. Its violence also stands in for the disruptive power of the unconscious, quaking under the surface before erupting in cancer, in accidents.

In some stories Hulme weaves a vigorous enchantment: in 'Planetesimal' a shabby, depressed girl at a dope-smokers' party wears a piece of the black starry universe, literally, on her elbow; in 'While my Guitar Gently Sings', another favourite, the woman's lament for her dead mother is full of a wild pain yet perfectly controlled. Equally often, though, Hulme can be grandiose or whimsical and, while her helter-skelter narration can excite as well as baffle, the Maori phrases are an added obstacle which will make some readers long for the kind of glossary included in *The Bone People*.

Ellen Gilchrist's prose is as taut and spacious as Joan Didion's or Margaret Atwood's and, like them, she turns a wry, appraising eye on her own spoilt America. Drunk with consumption as much as **Drunk with Love**, Gilchrist's characters have a terrible time coping with their appetites. 'The body is not on your side in anything,' muses the tragi-comic heroine of 'The Last Diet' as she arms herself yet again for the good fight, and drying out is Miss Crystal's problem in 'Traceleen at Dawn', a wicked tale of a Southern belle as narrated by her devoted black maid.

On the pitfalls of women's hunger for love, Gilchrist's tone is more sombre and cautionary. Unfortunately, in 'Memphis' and 'The Emancipator', both stories of mixed marriages, the theme of naivety or masochism in women is quite overshadowed by the brutality of the black husbands. This is tricky territory for a white writer and I, for one, was uneasy with the result. In 'Anna Part 1', on the other hand, where a woman writer extricates herself from an affair with a married man and goes staunchly back to work, Gilchrist's pitch is near-perfect. It takes skill to convince us that, in the middle of all this excess, some people do fall seriously — or ludicrously — in love, but this she does, reminding us with a lovely laconic touch that 'In a band of stars a billion light-years long this was not the only important thing going on. But it was one of them.'

It comes as no surprise that the work of Zimbabwean writer Charles Mungoshi was in the past banned by the Rhodesian government. In **The Setting Sun and the Rolling World** we see the search for work, the daily humiliations of poverty and white domination and, above all, the power of money 'to fill the eyes with tears of goodwill'. Clear-sighted, passionate and harsh, Mungoshi knows about damage. In the perceptive and poetic 'Shadows on the Wall' a boy is estranged from tenderness when his father calculatedly turns him against his mother. Later, when his father appeals for love, the boy has neither words nor will to comfort him. In the title story the old bonds and beliefs of village life are rejected piecemeal by a son struggling to break free of his father. In Mungoshi's vision the old rule of magic and the new rule of money clash and conjoin, and most of the time it is women and children who come off worst. Wives are betrayed, mothers spurned as burdensome, township girls are used and abused as the men stoke their bitter illusions of supremacy. Yet, even while he strips his characters bare, Mungoshi retains a lucid sympathy for the dreams of dignity which have been thwarted.

Marxism may be the best and most damning analysis of capitalism we have, but perhaps the primary strain in Edward Upward's **The Night Walk** comes from taking it further, stretching it thin until it is an almost religious belief in the perfectibility of human nature. It's not hard to imagine the cost of sustaining such political ideals over the past 50 years, as Upward has done with striking integrity, but ideology can strangle expression and this is the discomfort in Upward's imaginative fiction, no matter how important the themes.

When his focus is on autobiographical material, talk and ideas and characters jell more happily — as in 'At the Ferry Inn' where two estranged comrades battle intemperately over Leninism and Euro-Communism, overheard by purpling yacht-club Tories. Or again in 'An Old-Established School', where a self-critical schoolteacher condemns his brutal response to a boy who has made fun of his lecture on Laos. And Upward's voice is clearer still in the short polemics with their very personal starting-points — last night's dream, a new TV set, the crude slogan on a holidaymaker's T-shirt — and their compelling blend of decency, fire and Englishness. □

Alison Fell's new novel, The Bad Box, *will be published by Virago in June.*

FOOD

Down our throats

Rosalind Coward

Fed Up and Hungry: Women, Oppression and Food
ed. MARILYN LAWRENCE *Women's Press* £5.95

I DON'T KNOW a huge amount about compulsive eating but I do know a fair bit about compulsive reading and thinking about food. In this respect I share a common female obsession. And it says much about food in Western societies that a book ostensibly about specific eating disorders (anorexia, bulimia, compulsive eating) opens quickly onto general questions about the socialisation of women.

Fed Up and Hungry is a collection of essays from women who have in some way been influenced by or connected with the Women's Therapy Centre. It is therefore unashamedly 'feminist' in its approach, and rightly so. After all, 95 per cent of all anorexics and bulimics are female, indisputable evidence that women's rights to pleasures, or indeed straightforward nourishment, have been damaged. It is also unashamedly 'therapeutic'. All these illnesses are taken as psychosomatic, having their origin in psychological conflict.

Sometimes this is handled with immense insight, as with the exploration of bulimia ('bingeing' followed by self-induced vomiting) as a conflict between the extreme neediness of a girl child who has never been satisfied and the woman who views her needs as disgusting. Sometimes the treatment is more heavy-handed, as with the strange anthropomorphising of the flesh in 'the woman's fat is saying what she cannot say herself, an angry "fuck you" ', conjuring up visions of therapeutic sessions conducted between the therapist, the real 'thin' self, and a mound of verbalising flab. On the whole, though, these essays mark and consolidate the immensely important work which feminist therapists have been doing around eating disorders. Among its many achievements, there is a serious attempt at working definitions and interpretations of bulimia, the previous absence of which sheds light on how cultural factors have also shaped knowledge of the disorders. Bulimia, it appears, has been hidden by bulimics themselves. Ostensibly, at least, it is about loss of control and is therefore deeply shaming to the bulimics. Anorexia, on the other hand, with its connotations of ascetic self-denial, has been more publicly acceptable. This correspondence to the cultural restrictions put on women's shape was also the reason why anorexia has often been mistaken as the slimmer's disease.

If the writers in this book have long rejected such simplistic 'conditioning' theories of anorexia, they have not abandoned the quest for social as well as individual explanations for these disorders. Marilyn Lawrence provides some fascinating evidence about the types of women most susceptible to anorexia. In her article 'Education and Identity' she demonstrates the high incidence of anorexia among girls who are doing well educationally, locating anorexia in adolescent conflicts about femininity: 'Education contradicts women's sexuality; it offers women an identity in which sexuality will be problematic. Anorexia is an attempt to deal with this spoilt identity. It is a response to contradictory injunctions.'

The combination of feminist and therapeutic approaches in this book does not produce, as perhaps you might expect, a coherent and single theory on eating disorders. Some essays emphasise more sociological aspects of the patients' backgrounds. Some are so exclusively therapeutic as to concentrate on how women with eating problems tend to construct relationships with their therapists. Nevertheless there is something distinctive in the approaches, a view of patients both as individuals with formatively different family backgrounds but also as people who have had the same experience as women. Thus common themes run through the book — themes such as the denial of women's anger and aggressivity, the difficulty which mothers have in dealing with their daughter's needs when their own were always subordinated and the pressures on women to make their body and its desires social conformists.

This grafting of political considerations onto analytic ones has been criticised by some feminists as diluting the basic principles of psychoanalysis from which feminist therapy draws so much of its theory. The critics claim that feminist therapy assumes that women's needs can be discovered, then in some way satisfied, through the good experience of the supportive female therapist, a sort of emotional and political compensation for women's deprivations. Psychoanalysis, according to the purists, is more about guiding the patient to the point where she can live with the painful, but

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inevitable experience of deprivation, of loss, identified as the crucial and formative experience of the human being.

These criticisms are alluring but misplaced. For feminist therapy is far more important as a politically progressive force within feminism, rather than an adulterating force in psychoanalysis. Recognising women's anger and aggression and understanding how damaging it is to deny that aggression seem to me to be an entirely positive corrective for some strands of feminism. It is still common to meet bland assertions of women's superiority based on the idea that women are not aggressive and greedy like men (a position which always finds it hard to explain why feminists give each other a hard time). *Fed Up and Hungry* makes it clear that we've had enough of these views rammed down our throats already, quite enough in fact to make some of us very ill. □

HISTORY

Fiat and defiance

Martin Thom

Fascism in Popular Memory: The Cultural Experience of the Turin Working Class
LUISA PASSERINI trans. ROBERT LUMLEY and JUDE BLOOMFIELD *Cambridge* £25

IF THE POLITICAL organisations of a working class are destroyed, as they were in Italy between 1922 and 1926, what happens to the culture of that class in the years that follow? Luisa Passerini, using interviews with men and women from the industrial working class of Turin, together with police records and court reports, has tried to dismantle excessively simple images of either dissent or consent in order to give due weight to subjectivity as a complex and ambivalent third term between class and power.

Fascism in Popular Memory begins with an investigation of the 'self-portraits' workers drew in conversation and reminiscence, continues with an analysis of women's resistance to official demographic policies, and ends with a dramatic reconstruction of a celebrated episode in the mythology of anti-fascism, the silent reception given by 50,000 workers to Mussolini's speech at the inauguration of the new Fiat Mirafiori factory in 1939. Although this study's commitment is to the concept of 'collective representation', it is attentive not only to relations between the collective and the individual but also to that point at which individuality becomes opaque and irreducible. What the pioneering anti-fascist research of the 1930s and 1940s never quite made plain was the texture of a daily life in which there was, by turns, too much laughter and too much silence; here the reader is led by memory to the heart of that damaged world.

Some historians have used oral history as a kind of window on the past and as a method for gauging changes in social reality. Yet when someone *tells* a life story, it has its own formal properties and is very far from being a transparent screen through which another, more basic truth may be discerned. When a working-class person *writes* the same life story, the narrative is often tethered to the theme of education or self-education; in this it resembles novels within the classical European tradition. In general, however, those interviewed here present themselves as figures with a fixed identity, derived from an older, pre-industrial culture. The women often speak of themselves as born rebels who, in a spirit of comic irreverence, confront the given order of things with a fiercely ironic demeanour; the men at times act the prankster or wise fool but habitually they stand or fall by their practical 'know-how' in the workplace and, in spite of the often drastic deskilling of the period, call upon artisanal values.

Analysis of the general drift of jokes, songs and graffiti under a repressive regime here suggests that they will bear the marks of a regression and testify to 'a real and ruthless impoverishment of working-class culture'. Passerini means regression to refer both to the self-mocking and archaic personae assumed in the telling of stories, and to ambivalent jokes about fascism and, finally, to behaviour of a more or less infantile kind. The physical destruction of working-class organisations in Turin in 1922 and the fascist squads' use of cudgel and castor oil to humiliate their opponents had left bitter memories, cause for vendetta across a desolate 20 years, but in brutally individual forms which, mirroring the fascists' preoccupation with the body and shame, show just how damaging the loss of collective modes of self-determination can be.

In this tactful and sensitive book, Luisa Passerini manages to call upon a number of different theories on the margins of traditional historiography, but never forces the empirical material too far. For instance, a discussion of red/black colour symbolism ends with a quotation from a woman factory-worker in the 1950s, defending her right to wear red overalls: 'So that time . . . they asked me "And is it because you like red or is it because you are a Communist?" I replied: "Because I like red, because I'm a Communist, because I wear what colour I like, and because G. doesn't give me overalls and I don't want to spend money on his account. Why haven't I the right to wear what colour I like?"' 'The girl's reply', Passerini continues, 'summarises better than we could the multiplicity of meanings that a red outfit could assume in the daily struggle and the balance of forces in the factory.'

The real virtue of this study lies in its understanding of the ways in which, under a repressive regime, force and meaning exchange places in a subtle display of masking and unmasking. The writing of such a book, in which the path of accurate moral feeling might always have been lost through outrage or through a wish for too exhaustive a casual description, must have required great skill and an unerring sense of proportion. □

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JOURNALISM

Another world

Kofi Buenor Hadjor

The Guardian Third World Review: Voices from the South
ed. V. BRITTAIN and M. SIMMONS *Hodder* £5.95

WESTERN JOURNALISM on Third World subjects has a lot to answer for. It is still standard practice to adopt the tone of 'Would you believe what these people are up to?', to project an image of primeval irrationality. Many otherwise competent journalists cannot resist using the standards of Western society as the ultimate criteria for evaluating Third World subjects. Those inclined to take a friendly view are themselves imprisoned in their preconceptions and end up writing sob stories about poverty. The overall impression created is of a world of natural disasters, political violence and despair.

Of course, for those of us from the Third World, there is a lot to despair about. It would be dishonest and artificial to pretend that the Third World reality is overwhelmingly one of positive images or of steady progress. However, as all good journalists ought to know, reality is never 'this' or 'that'. It is a complex ensemble of social relations full of ambiguities. Human experience has shown us that hopelessness often coexists with creativity and that resignation can live alongside the burning desire to fight back. We do not expect Western journalists to become public relations officers extolling the virtues of the Third World, but we have every right to demand a journalism that also looks at a different society from the inside, on its own terms.

One of the few honourable exceptions to the norm is *The Guardian Third World Review*. This supplement, which has been going strong since March 1978, has succeeded in publishing material that is at once strong and relevant to Third World concerns. Although some of the material published is uneven, the overall balance stands in favourable contrast with that achieved by most Western newspapers. The articles contained in *Voices from the South* serve as an illustration of high quality, thought-provoking journalism. Many of the articles are well researched and based on direct experience. As a result, they retain, in book form, their relevance and some of their immediacy.

One of the main merits of the collection is that it is able to reinterpret the news and offer a version of events not usually available to the Western reader. During the past decade the Third World has replaced the Soviet Union as the major international bogey of the media. According to the new official wisdom the major threat to world stability now resides in places like Nicaragua, Libya and Lebanon. The Arab gunman, the international terrorist and the religious fanatic are the bread and butter of Third World news. *Voices from the South* cuts across these distortions and helps the reader understand that it is the Third World that is the usual victim of terrorism and of external aggression.

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It has also gone some way towards providing a platform for Third World writers. This in itself is an important achievement. Articles by Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Wole Soyinka, Ahmed Rashid and Soon Young Yoon offer a diversity of insights from a perspective that is often denied the Western reader. And the articles work well alongside each other, reinforcing each other and presenting a multi-dimensional overview of the key issues facing the Third World.

The collection is heavily weighted towards Africa; almost half the book consists of Africa related articles. This in itself is not necessarily a problem — since, of any region in the Third World, Africa is the one most mystified in the Western press — but the emphasis on Africa means that vital developments in Asia, the Middle East and Latin America do not get the attention they deserve. In their Foreword the editors appear to be aware of this problem and it is expected that future issues of *Third World Review* will rectify it.

Good journalism is always a useful way in to a new subject and this volume is no exception. It should serve as an ideal introduction to a subject that is often so poorly treated. The editors are to be commended for their recognition of the need for a relevant journalism for Third World issues and deserve the support of the internationally concerned readership. □

Kofi Buenor Hadjor is editor of Third World Book Review.

HORROR

War against god

Kim Newman

NO GENRE IS AS POTENT as horror when it comes to undermining pervasive notions of morality, particularly if they are enforced by a rigid religious system. The first flowering of the gothic novel in the 18th century, with Lewis' *The Monk* and Mrs Radcliffe's *The Italian*, was founded to a great extent on English alarm at the excesses of popery — represented in those books by the hypocritical lecheries of the monkish anti-heroes and the sadistic zeal of the Inquisition. Similarly, James Hogg's *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* used the popular doppelganger/deal-with-the-Devil motifs to get to the smug and scarifying heart of Calvinism. Today's gods are different, and today's authors have had to find stronger methods of dealing with them.

Ramsey Campbell's **The Hungry Moon** (Century, £9.95) is as basic a retelling of the Lovecraftian nightmare as possible: an ancient, evil, tentacled force emerges from a Yorkshire cave and dominates the small town of Moonwell, where perpetual night falls and all truck with the outside world gradually fades away. But Campbell, unparalleled when creating infuriating characters whose monstrousness lies in their essential banality, has chosen to work his themes from inside a trenchant critique of the species of fundamentalism represented by the American evangelist who is the handiest tool the monster can find for spreading his dominion over the Earth. Campbell writes brilliantly about religious fanaticism and cleverly zeroes in, not on the wilder shores of belief represented by the kinkiest fringe cults, but on the suddenly fashionable 'moral majority' view that perhaps the Spanish Inquisition had something going for it after all.

As a horror novel, *The Hungry Moon* is perhaps a lesser work than Campbell's recent output — *Incarnate, Obsession* — in that the author is notably less happy with the inconsistent rural setting than with the bleak cityscapes and urban dead-ends which are his usual stalking places, and his large cast of stragglers seem to find it difficult to connect with each other and the plot, which makes for a curiously unsettling, almost frustrating effect. However, the deeply-felt anger against the censorious and the intolerant makes many sequences unforgettable — as when the god-fearing citizens of Moonwell become a vicious lynch mob and try to exterminate all the ungodly — and, yet again, Campbell reveals his rare talent for conceiving of Good characters who are fallible, believable and bearable.

T.E.D. Klein, whose collection **Dark Gods** (Pan, £2.50) features four novellas, is also a second- or third-generation disciple of H.P. Lovecraft. 'Black Man With a Horn', one of the pieces reprinted here, is sprinkled liberally with quotes from the Sage of Providence and narrated by a now ancient (and fictitious) member of the author's literary circle. Lovecraft, an atheist by temperament, was much given to inventing his own unhealthy gods, and Klein cheerfully follows suit. 'Nadelman's God', perhaps the most powerful of the stories in *Dark Gods*, features a 20th-century deity dreamed up by a teenage poet and featured in the lyrics of a heavy metal album — and which subtly manifests itself to its creator when he has outgrown the juvenile morbidity that led him to conceive of the creature in the first place. Klein also gives us 'Children of the Kingdom', in which pre-human beings from Costa Rica crop up in tunnels beneath New York, driven by an insatiable urge to mate with human women, and 'Petey', in which a yuppie housewarming party is gate-crashed by a spare homunculus left in the unethically acquired mansion by the alchemist previous owner.

Klein, like Campbell, is fond of subtlety. While his work packs in as many shocks and scares as any of his contemporaries, he always models his approach on *The Turn of the Screw* and favours a gradual accumulation of dark hints which eventually force the reader to draw an incredible, inescapable conclusion. Lovecraft was wont to underline his climaxes with italicised passages in which the Cyclopaean monstrosities he had created were brought centre stage to chew the head off his narrator; but Klein omits any actual manifestations, leaving the doubtless violent fates of his protagonists *literally* unspeakable by letting them take place after the final sentence. This rethinking frequently pays off, as when the narrator of 'Black Man With a Horn' realises the conventions he is living by and lays his pen aside to await the coming of the (particularly nauseating) monster avenger, with dignity and an ironic question for HPL.

Anne Rice more or less abandons religion altogether in **The Vampire Lestat** (Futura, £3.50) — 'The Second Book in the Chronicles of the Vampires', a.k.a. a sequel to her successful *Interview with a Vampire*. The protagonist, a French aristocrat down on his luck in 18th-century Paris and pressganged into the ranks of the undead, spends several centuries searching for his own kind, hoping to learn something of the nature of his condition, and is rewarded with a lengthy flashback to Ancient Egypt in which we are presented with the Vampire Creation Myth. The book is as lush, overheated and complex as an 18th-century romance, but is less concerned with chilling spines — after all, one side-effect of spending 600 pages in the mind of a vampire is that the undead tend to lose their mystery — than with notions of morality and decadence. Lestat comes up with elaborate codes of conduct concerning those he feeds upon and those he recruits as immortal companions, but is unable to stick to them (shunning innocent blood, making only 'suitable candidates' vampires) for even a few years, let alone the two hundred he lives through. As in the earlier novel, Rice's strength is in her vampire characters: offering us here not only the effete, self-punishing, romantic and greedy Lestat, but Armand the monstrous adolescent, Marius the practical seeker after knowledge, Nicki the self-hating tagalong and, strangest of all, Gabrielle, Lestat's wiser, crueller, more honest mother and sometime lover.

Campbell, Klein and Rice are consciously working inside a tradition that is as old as the vampire Lestat, but the secret of their various successes is that they are also speaking for and to the late 20th century in a fashion of which mainstream fiction is proving itself incapable. □

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The future of socialism

Peter Pritchard, Midhurst, W.Sussex
At no time in the last hundred years has the reputation of socialism been lower and at no time has socialism been more necessary. As Eric Hobsbawm (*NS* 6 March) says, socialism is about doing great things, and not just because we want these things but because they are necessary if civilisation is to survive. A sense of urgent necessity seems lacking from the contributions so far.

The methods of science and technology are those of socialism, not those of the capitalist jungle. Why has this not become a central feature of socialist thinking?

The ecological necessity for socialism is even greater; a vastly increased world population, each of us making larger demands in a more damaging way on scarcer resources. Human kind is in deep trouble. Are there any grounds for hoping that we will get out of it? Yes, human nature. The first human beings took their food back to the camp and shared it. The first human beings were socialists; had they not been, we should not be here.

Kevin Whitston, Wolverhampton
The economic crisis is a crisis of socialism too. Socialism in the East and Social Democracy in the West are rejected by socialists who blame 'socialism' for their own Frankenstein creations before collapsing into the arms of their capitalist critics in a state of intellectual panic.

The social democratic state that broke up in the late 1970s was built by Labour but its inspiration came from radical liberal theorists like Keynes and Beveridge married to an older, statist, conception of socialism, shaped by Fabians like the Webbs. What Bevan described as 'pre-1914 Liberalism brought up to date' is what is actually in crisis. Labour remains trapped in the ideological wreckage of the post-war boom searching for a new set of compromises that will allow it to occupy roughly the same political territory as the SDP without abandoning its social base. It is a manoeuvre which is already failing, but what do your contributors offer instead?

Professor Plant offers us the socialism of the French Revolution: liberty, equality and fraternity, but with 'community' tacked on the end. Julian LeGrand — in a world dominated by monopolies and multinationals — believes that markets disperse economic power. Hattersley's socialism is capitalism plus equality while Paul Hirst wants to start again with 'a new variant of 1960s corporatism' where political and economic power is devolved to new 'associations'. His small-scale corporatism is distinguished from big corporation, not by democracy but by utopianism.

We believe, like Mr Hirst, in a socialism of the 'associated producers' but that is impossible without common ownership and a planned economy neither of which need take the form of a Stalinised bureaucracy. If it is truly the case that mankind cannot collectively work out solutions in a democratic way to the problems of directly managing economic life then there is no future, capitalist or socialist, in which human freedom will finally flourish.

We can make a beginning now. We do not need to wait for the next Labour government or until after the revolution. Let the unions and the socialists inside and outside the Labour Party advocate the creation of Workers Planning Commissions to focus the struggle for a different division of labour than that demanded by the multinationals and the City and begin to create in practice the institutional forms and relationships of the democratically planned economy. Socialism will survive the present criris, not because of the superiority of its principles, but because the fate of millions depends upon it.

Professor Paul Hirst, Birkbeck College, University of London
Dave Bradney (Letters 20 March) takes me to task for the 'mistake' of considering Proudhon a socialist in my piece 'Can socialism live?' (*NS* 6 March). He asserts that Proudhon was an anarchist *tout court*. Proudhon was a complex and contradictory thinker, and his influence on both socialism and anarchism was widespread and multiform. French socialism in the mid-19th century was less than doctrinaire and drew heavily on Proudhon. Leading democratic socialists like G. D. H. Cole in his *History of Socialist Thought* rightly considered him part of the socialist tradition.

I have no wish to deny anarchists the intellectual and political resources of Proudhon's works, but I would hope they in turn would show the same willingness not to pigeonhole thinkers and demand an exclusive copyright on certain ideas. Proudhon is surely available to both anarchists and associational socialists to use, learn from and criticise as they wish. It would be sad if those who want to abolish private property were to become unduly obsessive about intellectual property.

Paul Nish in the same issue assumes that as an ivory tower intellectual I am indifferent to working-class experience and am, therefore, willing to downgrade the centrality to socialism of economic issues. But my whole point was that unless socialism is able to deliver political change, working people will never be empowered in a way that enables them to change their economic condition. Traditional statist 'socialism' and collectivist welfarism have failed to promote autonomy and self-action. We can only deal with the feeling of inarticulate powerlessness Mr Nish so rightly speaks of if we enable and empower the people whose response to suffering and exclusion that feeling is. But we can only do that if we look outside the shrinking ghetto of the traditional manual working class.

Socialist policy for the arts

David Ripley, Oxford
What on earth is Tony Dunn (*NS* 20 March) on about? His article on the arts, from first tangled metaphor (about heroic Tone standing his ground, waving goodbye to the poor old 'bandwagon of popular culture') to final opaque paradox (what does 'socialist selfishness' *really* mean?) amounts to a paean to simple perversity. Little directly constructive is offered — apart from a demand for 40 new universities (who's he trying to kid, and anyway, what do universities have to do with the practice of art?). His 'new' (sic) art's theoretical basis is that it is 'vulgar' and 'it slants athwart all ideologies'.

The article rises to a superb climax of self-contradiction. While the Labour Party is busily creating 400,000 university places (for artists?), it admires 'an informal network' spreading (how? why should it spread, all of a sudden?). 'Anyone can join' declares Tone proudly . . . er, well, not quite *anyone*: membership is limited to 'first-class intelligences', because second-raters keep you 'hanging around for ages'. Forget that the artist concerned might keep you hanging around because he or she might be a bit busy actually *producing* art, we can now define 'first-class intelligence'/significant artist as someone who replies by return of post.

If Tony Dunn wrote this article to provoke, he has certainly succeeded, with me, at least. The trouble is, I *think* he means it — whatever 'it'

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actually is. The issue of the significance of the arts in contemporary society is too important to be left in the hands of the Culture Muggers. Art should give people (and preferably a *lot* of people) truth, certainly, but it also needs to give entertainment, not pontification; arouse emotion, not simply give insult; create debate, not simply provoke. All of these aspects of art demand co-operation, not aggression — at the least, between audience and artist. Since co-operation works best in smaller groups, a socialist policy should principally encourage the arts on a local and regional basis. This means providing money, and suitable organisation, for artists to attract a following of local people in the first place, then seduce that audience into alternatives, then listen to their responses.

A tamed Scottish lion

Pádraig Ó Conchúir, London E6
Rob Edwards (*NS* 20 March) drew attention to the reluctance of the Scottish Labour Party to prepare openly for a 'Doomsday' situation where a blatantly non-Tory Scotland could be threatened with a further dose of Thatcherism. Another Caledonian taboo that he failed to mention is the inclusion of an Irish factor in the eventual general election. Thanks to visits from the Irish mainland by Ian Paisley, a Scottish Unionist Party has been conjured up. Its function is to punish Mrs Thatcher for her treachery in signing the Anglo-Irish Agreement back in 1985. That punishment will be applied by the intervention of a SUP (Orange) candidate in most or possibly all of the Scottish constituencies represented by a Tory MP.

Although there are notable individual exceptions, such as Dennis Canavan, the Parliamentary Labour Party has an appalling record regarding Ireland. Nevertheless the Scottish Labour Party has so far enjoyed the completely undeserved support of most of the considerable Irish ethnic community in Scotland. With even a modest 'Irish' electoral plank in its programme the Scottish National Party could readily forestall many of those votes; it could also attract the support of many who had previously ignored the electoral process. Fortunately for Scottish Labour there is virtually no danger of such an erosion of its Irish votes.

Despite its impressive title the SNP has a long tradition of funking any authentically Scottish stand in favour of what can best be described as North British Regionalism. Consideration of that casually labelled Anglo-Irish Agreement confirms the validity of that assessment. Either or both of the SNP members (of Parliament) could have registered an official protest or conceivably supplied a more apt title. To have done so would have entailed grasping one of those strictly taboo Irish nettles!

Tim Williams, London SW8
Beware the English who live in the Celtic Fringe. They tend to go native, by which I mean nationalist. This certainly seems to have happened to Rob Edwards. How else to interpret his support for a strategy which would result in the dismemberment of the British State, leaving the nationalists in control of Scotland, and the Tories permanently in the saddle in the rest of the country? This may seem revolutionary to a Scottish nationalist: it seems disastrous to me as a British socialist.

There may be Welsh and Scottish voters, but there is only a *British* electorate as there is only a British Parliament, control of which would give Labour political legitimacy throughout Britain. If Labour wins the next election it will not lack legitimacy in East Anglia merely because it has minority support there. Democratic socialist Britain will include the Fens as well as the Gorbals. It will also include Ulster, over which Labour is unlikely to deny itself legitimacy, though the party denies the people of the Province even the right to vote for it.

It is not the job of the Labour Party to attempt to dislodge the Scots from their historic orientation of the British State. 'Defending the Scottish Nation from Westminster' should be left to the SNP, whose cause it is. Our cause is to make the Labour Party once again capable of winning the British electorate to democratic socialism.

Critical offer

M. P. Marcus, Bromley, Kent
I was nearly one-third of the way through Margaret Millar's *Spider Webs* when I read the review by Nick Kimberley (*NS* 6 March). During the course of it was I was informed of three things, including the ending, which I would have much preferred to have found out for myself by reading the book. Your reviewer is so anxious to push forward his polemical views that he neglects to do his proper job. I would suggest that either your reviewer changes his methods or that you change your reviewer.

Kith and kin

Christopher Gordon, Council of Regional Arts Associations, Winchester, Hants.
Whilst welcoming the increasing breadth and depth of arts coverage in the *New Statesman*, may I make one comment on a matter of fact? For the second time in a matter of months you refer to 'the Arts Council and its Regional Arts Association siblings' (Felix Culper, *NS* 20 March). Heavily funded by the Arts Council the RAAs may be, and are, but genetically, while the Arts Council is the creature of central government, the RAAs are the progeny of local government. The RAAs were originally created spontaneously by local authorities in response to the Arts Council's closure of its own regional offices in the 1950s. Consequently, although to the general observer the rivalry may often look remarkably like sibling behaviour, you are not strictly accurate in terms of blood relationship.

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ATTRACTIVE MAN, 27, interests include: films, books, walking, travel and wide variety of music. Career move to Stoke-on-Trent leaves me looking for a boost to my social life. I offer in return warmth, sense of humour, sensitivity & fun. Would like to meet woman of similar age, lively, warm, attractive, leftish within driving distance. Box (14)4778. W14.7

BALANCED, WARM, attractive, financially independent 45 year-old woman seeks kind, attractive, male companion with a sense of humour. Possible shared interests: literature, languages, travel, food, walking, theatre, cinema, jazz. Manchester area. Box (14)4753. W14.8

BEAUTIFUL ORIENTAL Girls wish to contact gentlemen for friendship, love and marriage. Please send s.a.e. for further details of this serious programme to: Miss S. Ounban, P.O. Box 39, Reigate, Surrey RH2 8YX. W7.16

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GRADUATE MALE, 36, socialist outlook and reasonably vice free personality, seeks similar female, 25-45, for relaxation, adventure and perhaps *longer term horizons. East Midlands.* Box (14)4776. W14.10

I AM a feminine, even Rubenesque, Titian-haired woman, needing a man to care and cook for, with serious intentions of Jewish marriage in mind if spark is lit. You should be an adult 35-55 years, with sense of humour and enjoying pace of London life. Box (14)4760. W14.11

I AM a friendly, attractive, socialist, heterosexual woman, 37, living in London, interested in making new friends, male and female, possibly with a view to forming a small arts group, for visits to the theatre, opera, concerts etc. Box (14)4751. W14.12

IF YOU need a caring Jewish mother substitute living in London, I am the answer to your prayers. I seek love in a lively Jewish marriage, with a man in his 40s. I make marvellous chicken soup too. Box (14)4759. W14.13

LADY professional (45), misses sharing life with unattached, compatible gentleman. Enjoys: homelife, gardening, cinema, theatre, books, boating, swimming, walking, motoring, scrabble, socialising, serenity. (Photo appreciated). Box (14)4755. W14.14

LONDON MALE, 33, professional, slim, 5′ 8″, creative — seeks female. I am so called Indian, but race immaterial. If you like caring man, please write Box (13)4714. W13.24

LOVELY, SMALLISH, ELEGANT woman (Oxford), in caring profession, fastidiously seeking hunky-ish, handsome, health-conscious humanitarian (35-50), for life-long, extra-marital love. Confidence honoured. Box (14)4757. W14.15

MILLIONAIRE BUSINESSMAN, 45, elegant, educated, Asian — seeks fun loving lady under 45, for candle-lit dinners and possibly to accompany on luxury holiday to Florida/California/Hawaii. Box (13)4720. W13.25

NEW SELECTIONS for friendship/marriage. All ages, all areas. Special offer this month. New Selections, Dept 4L, 185 Thetford Road, Brandon, Suffolk, IP27 0DF. W13.27

SENSITIVE HIPPY, 24, seeks sincere and caring female, for loving relationship. Box (14)4756. W14.16

TEACHER (54), widow, arts interests (particularly drawing and painting), seeks like-minded man, London. Summer holiday envisaged somewhere warm and cultural. Write fully with photo. Box (14)4758. W14.17

TALL, DARK and nearly handsome man, 39, educated, rich, intelligent — seeks sexy lady under 50, who has a taste for a younger man. Telephone number please. Box (13)4718. W13.33

WANTED — sexy busty lady under 55, who fancies a younger man. Elegant man 40, educated, affluent, intelligent, will love to hear from you. Telephone number please. Box (13)4719. W13.35

WEST MIDLANDS AREA — male (31), wishes to meet similar female (25-35), for friendship maybe more. Interests: cinema, reading, pubs & travel. Box (14)4754. W14.18

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WEST MIDLANDS woman seeks correspondents, any age, either sex, to write to on any and every subject and opinion. Friendship only. Box (13)4734. W13.10

WORKSHOP

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Enquiries: Laura Berryman 01-251 5487

Theatre

NATIONAL THEATRE 01-928 2252 Olivier (open stage) **ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.** Lyttelton (proscenium stage) **THE MAGISTRATE, TONS OF MONEY.** Cottesloe (Small auditorium) **YERMA, THREE MEN ON A HORSE.** See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded information 01-928 2256.

BLOOMSBURY THEATRE 01-387 9629. Until 4 April 7.30 p.m. **ABBEY OPERA** in **SILVERLAKE** by **Kurt Weill.** 8, 10, 11, April 7.30 p.m. **ATALANTA** — Opera in three episodes by Robert Ashley 8th-**MAX,** 10th-**WILLARD,** 11th-**BUD.**

ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY 01-628 8795/638 8891.
BARBICAN THEATRE: ROMEO AND JULIET 9-21 April, **MACBETH** 22-25 April, **RICHARD II** 30 April-7 May.
THE PIT: COUNTRY DANCING by Nigel Williams, 3-4 April, 22-25 April.
SARCOPHAGUS by Vladimir Gubaryev 9-21 April.
MERMAID THEATRE 01-236 5568/638 8891.
THE FAIR MAID OF THE WEST by Thomas Heywood 3-4 April, 22-30 April, 1-12 May. **EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOUR** by Ben Jonson 8-21 April.

AGENDA

FOR DETAILS CALL JANET BANKS 01-739 1645

Deadline: 2pm Mondays

SAT 4 APR

AGM & DISCUSSION: 'Harmonisation' of Benefits and Working Conditions: *A Campaigning Issue for the Left in Europe?* Red Rose Club, 129 Seven Sisters Road, London N7 at 11 a.m. Organisers: IFLE LINKS EUROPA.

MON 6 APR

LONDON HISTORY WORKSHOP Seminar. Speaker Jon Cook 'Politics and Poetry' at the White Swan, 14 New Row, WC2, 7.30 p.m.

CAMPAIGN

DEPRESSED BY THE OPINION POLLS? Tactical Voting can deny the Thatcher Government a third term. Help TV 87 to inform voters (Alliance & Labour) how to make their votes count. Send donation to Tactical Voting, 61 Sotheby Road, London N5 2UP. (Send s.a.e. for information about campaign or ring 01-354 0823).

See above for new Agenda deadline

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BACKCHAT

OUT TO LUNCH

Toads in the hole

Andrew Lumsden

NEVER MORE, never more out to lunch. The *NS* has moved and the Aylesbury caff in Clerkenwell Green will see us no more. Never more fish on Friday, or toad-in-the-hole almost any day of the week; never more apple crumble with custard *and* ice-cream for Vicky (art editor, not late cartoonist).

Clerkenwell is full of Italians, as any fool knows, so of course the Aylesbury, despite its Anglo name, echoes with Italian accents. Last summer I wore a promo t-shirt blazoned with the single word TOCATTA, name of the *NS* typesetters, and the Italian mama of the Aylesbury screamed with laughter. *Tocatta* means mad.

From *City Limits*, from The Women's Press, from Brilliance Books, the scribblers will pile into the Aylesbury among the building site workers white with concrete . . . but never more the *NS*. We'll have to give up Boggi's too, in Mount Pleasant, where last Christmas I saw the proletariat — *vis.* the two Italian sisters who wait at table — nearly rise in Red Revolution against a *Marxism Today* party who didn't all want their pre-ordered Xmas dins.

I hope we find Italians running *something* round our new quarters in Hackney. I hope to God we do. I direct my prayers in that direction since I've always supposed God is, or was, on the whole Italian. Nothing less explains why the Church of England gives such an impression — and good on it, I say — of being a faith without a deity.

The Vatican I predict could shortly be in the same position, which would be an improvement. I see from the *Independent* that cardinals are going to Leningrad next year to debate with Soviet atheists whether God is dead. It looks set to be the funniest event of 1988 and I trust ITV and the BBC are besieging the Kremlin for invitations. In how honest a spirit of enquiry will things be conducted? Can we expect a cardinal to discover that God does seem to be rather dead, or a *glasnost* intellectual to state that he has detected a pulse? Will there be a photocall at which sober-suited Russians and gowned prelates embrace one another looking like a homosexual party of the 1950s?

Personally, I assume — lifting the idea from a novel by druggy sf genius Philip K. Dick — that the Soviets will use the Leningrad conference to make a major scientific announcement: that their space programme has found the carcass of God floating lifeless beyond Jupiter. There will be a suicide note expressing apologies for Iran, Lebanon, Palestine, Northern Ireland, Geoffrey Dickens MP, every single one of the Popes other than Pope Joan and for Cardinal Simonis' recent teaching on Dutch radio that landlords are justified in refusing to let flats to gays.

I fully share God's distress. On my own patch, I never cease to be amazed at the freedom stipendiary Catholic dignitaries and lay Reformation proselytisers allow themselves in insulting gays, bare decades after fearful shame forced the Fisherman's disciples to give up their identical conduct to the Jews. Witness not only Cardinal Simonis (unrebuked by the Holy Father) but the N. Tebbit approved Conservative Family Campaign. The 1987 programme of these followers of gentle Jesu meek and mild, which I've just had in the post, wants 'Aids victims isolated, funds cut off Terrence Higgins Trust, homosexuality recriminalised'.

I object. As an English gent of the old school — GLF, GLC, LLGC & bar, no doubt too many bars — but also on behalf of friends who are Christians to the very wearing of crosses at the throat. Who *are* these toads of cardinals and CFCers, crawling from holes beneath St Peter's rock? And where is there so much as one fee'd ecclesiastic to rise in wrath and denounce them as they go about canting of charity but seeking whom they may devour? While I'm at it, how long have my taxes got to go on financing Tebbit's groceries and his Holy Office, Smith Square, *twice over*, as MP and as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster?

God on his uppers, and *NS* eating habits too. I dare say we'll turn to the excellent lunch-room of the London Apprentice. A gay pub. □

WINE

Matter of tasting

Stephen Brook

SPRING IS THE SEASON when the British wine trade goes a-tasting in London. During peak periods it's possible to attend more than one a day. Two recent tastings proved of interest, though in unexpected ways. One of Britain's largest wine merchants, whose name it would be prudent not to disclose (Grants of St James's), held a tasting to launch a new range of over 40 wines. After the tasting the press was given a 'presentation' in the form of a brief talk and slide show.

The merchants, we learned, had undertaken a thorough R&D programme to identify consumers' attitudes to wine and to packaging. They identified two main groups: the occasional drinker who likes to play safe and stick to one or two favourites (invariably branded wines from a large merchant) and the more adventurous drinker who is prepared to try unfamiliar wines if reasonably confident of the quality. (I could have told them this for nothing.) After great deliberation, the marketing people at Grants decided to put out not a range of own-label wines but a group of individually labelled wines united by a neck label reading 'Wines Selected By Grants of St James's'. This, it was felt, would provide confidence and reassurance. Great care was given to label design.

The groundwork prepared, the Grants buyers tramped around Europe to find suitable wines. Among the criteria were quality, individuality, consistency of supply, and value, though they were not required to opt for cheapness at the expense of quality. The results of the combined efforts of marketing teams and wine buyers were now before us.

My own response was of disappointment, and it was widely shared by other tasters. Few of the wines were unpleasant, but I found only five that I would be glad to drink rather than taste. Most were dull. Moreover, the wines, good or bad, seemed expensive given the level of quality. I do not doubt that the Grants team went about their task conscientiously, but something seems to have gone wrong. With no fewer than seven Masters of Wine on the buying staff — roughly seven per cent of the total membership of this elite corps of the wine trade — there can have been no shortage of expertise. Yet few of their choices were more than merely adequate.

No doubt one of the problems is that of consistency of supply. A superb single-vineyard or limited-production wine, however reasonable the price, is no use to any large merchant. Highly individual characteristics — the features that make wine interesting — cannot be reproduced year in, year out. Wines made in bulk may be sound, correct and perfectly drinkable; they are unlikely to be brilliant. Moreover, a wine that is bland should at least be cheap.

I fear that Grants, however well intentioned, have got the strategy wrong. A firm such as

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Sainsbury's has, by and large, got it right, and did so years ago.

There the play-it-safe drinker can choose from a wide range of own-label wines, nearly all acceptable, some outstanding (the 1983 Alsace Riesling was sensational) and invariably cheap. The Vintage Selection racks give Sainsbury's seal of approval to carefully chosen and eclectic bottles from individual producers; these have proved a mixed bag, but there are marvellous wines among them at good prices. Victoria Wine adopt a similar strategy by supplementing mass-produced wines with their Cellar Selection, though it would help if Selection wines didn't have to be ordered specially. Grants have made the mistake of putting their 'Selected By' labels on wines too pricy to lure the play-it-safe drinker and too ordinary to interest the well-informed consumer. They will doubtless do well within the hotel and pub trade, but I can't see that their new range has anything new or interesting to offer the discriminating wine drinker.

The second tasting was on Australia Day. Over 200 wines, representing almost the entire range of Australian wines available in Britain, were on show. I tasted for over four hours, first whites, then reds, taking careful notes on 73 wines, since I intended to write about those of greatest interest. I decided not to do so, simply because I decided I couldn't trust my own notes. Wines tasted after lunch scored higher marks on average than those tasted in the morning. Why? I don't know. Some wines kept on ice refreshed and charmed the palate when it was growing jaded; other white wines had warmed up and showed less impressively. My palate, quite simply, began to tire and flag. My notes begin to concentrate less on the subtleties of a wine than its impact, its attack and length. Australian wines are, many of them, high in alcohol and, despite conscientious spitting, one cannot help imbibing a fair quantity in the course of a day. Delicately pissed tasters are unlikely to be judicious tasters. I certainly spotted some marvellous wines, and some duds too, but to attempt judgments on the basis of a mass tasting would almost certainly be misleading. Such a generous deluge of wine brings too many variables into play.

So there is no report on Australian wine this month, but next month I shall offer comments on a large range of Australian Chardonnays tasted in less strenuous circumstances. □

FIRST PERSON

Ladies of the house

Jeanette Winterson

'WHO'LL BE the lead name?' asked our mortgage broker.

We looked blank. We were arranging a joint mortgage.

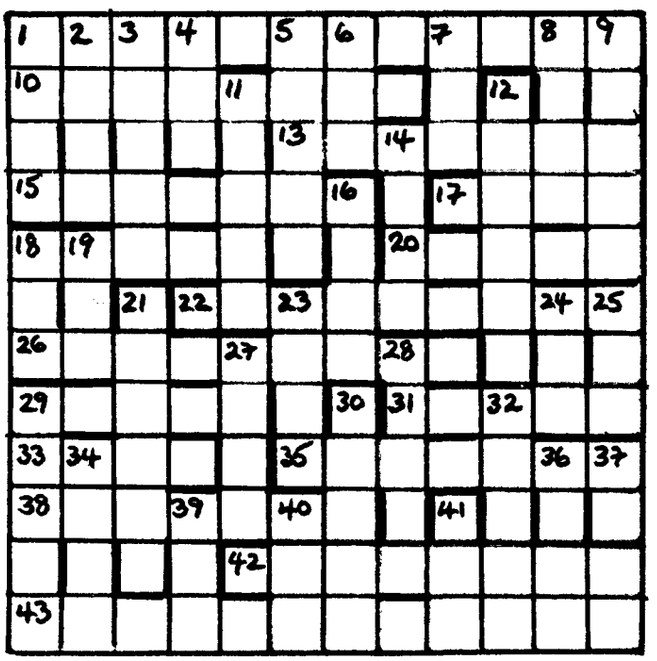
He reassured us that this was nothing formal; the bank and the life insurance people liked to deal with one person. It made things simpler. When I told him it wouldn't make things simpler for us, he showed me the form with the boxes placed one above the other. 'One of you put your name in the top box and that one will be the contact.' We wrote our names side by side.

Some days later a letter arrived addressed to my lover. She was away and so it took us more than a week to discover that the bank wanted us to contact them urgently. 'Please write to both of us,' I said.

'We can write to Mr and Mrs, providing it's one name, but we can't write to two names on a

Salamanca 119
'Cnut'

PRIZES: £12 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Salamanca 119, New Statesman, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8BA, by first post 27 April.



Each down clue numbers and defines two answers, but for the secondary hints both answers are taken together, either coming first, grid positions for solvers to determine.

Name_____

Address_____

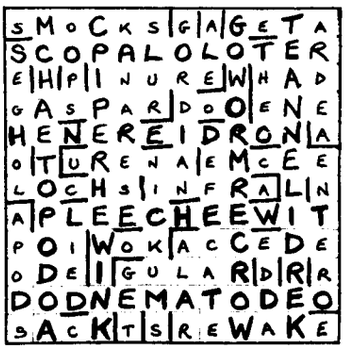
ACROSS

1 Hail from East in the press: this is an ancient Jewish custom (12)
10 A terrible defeat in court later overthrown (8)
13 This opens one to obligations of secrecy (7)
15 Island group, one among a company round about East (7)
17 A lot of *red* wine? (4)
18 Horrid dreams, dead *and* gone? (5)
20 Hair one's got in a state (5)
22 A flaw in mining area at furthest depth: you'll find it below coal seam (2 words, 9)
26 Snakish young creature you see about in the outside no longer? (9)
29 Greenstone trinket found on edge of the desert (5)
31 First old (but not the earliest) gasteropod (5)
(33 God, this is quite the opposite of expected result of royal folly? (4))
35 It's a mistake to be seen clasping ring, we hear, like an affected person does (7)
38 No longer shoot to be successful in potting 'ead? (7)
42 I'm bulging during spate, say (contents of time I had consumed) (8)
43 Plant found on its own and concealed among wild lea moss (12)

DOWN

1 & 37 Who'll hide roots with earth, say? Ireland, the cad (4)(4)
2 & 36 Plain drunks got vases smashed (4)(4)
3 & 32 Chinks sailing a first-class steamer adrift (2,3)(5)
4 & 41 Temple chief given a label in short battle (3)(3)
5 & 30 Plant chewed by cows: if ulmin's chewed and digested as well, easily changed (5)(5)
6 & 40 Old fool drunk in dance making fuss (3)(3)
7 & 39 Partly young gentleman turning up a lot of eggs in a nest (3)(3)
8 & 34 Once again make watercourse by excavating road and lane (4)(4)
9 & 29 Fits string with sure gel as coming loose on instrument (5)(5)
11 & 28 Question of ownership cook used to stop 'orse misbehaving in road (5)(5)
12 & 21 Safe question to put to a real lively but heartless policeman (6)(6)
14 & 27 Rash Canute, i.e. crazy case (4)(4)
16 & 23 it is covered by girl born with flat, broad nose once, not a pro (4)(4)
18 & 25 Eat out in the morning, taking salted meat and so on (3)(3)
19 & 24 Grub that's to bind small marsupial (3)(3)

Solution to Salamanca 118



Unclued answers are examples of (early) birds (scoter, heron, peewit, dodo, Moa, chewink, gorecrow, terek) literally catching worms (palolo, nereid, leech, nematode, chaetopod, piper, worm, annelid).

Prizewinners to Salamanca 118

Mrs Veronica Foley (Ickenham, Middx.)

D. G. Tallis (Oxford)

M. Drew (Sonning Common, Berks.)

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domestic loan.' The lady went on to explain that the computer was only programmed to store one set of personal details. 'I'd like to speak to the person who designed this programme,' I said, imagining some fat patriarch cunningly doing away with the fruits of feminism at the touch of a button. She told me it was just a standard, anonymous, everyday, what are you making such a fuss about? programme. Exit Winterson, avenger of women.

'Never mind,' said the Estate Agent when we grumbled about how long the mortgage was taking us. 'You girls will be in there soon.' I like my Estate Agent, he's about the same age as me.

Official letters continued to arrive addressed only to my lover. Then, as completion drew near and it was my turn to be away, I phoned the bank to ask if she could sign the papers on my behalf. No. We weren't married. I protested that nobody ever wrote to me anyway so I might as well continue to be the pale ghost the computer wasn't programmed to recognise. There was a short laugh. 'We may not write to you Madam, but we know you're there.' Such is the comfort for those of us whose names are not in the top box.

We moved in. British Telecom don't have a facility for putting an account in two names, nor will they list separate names sharing the same line in their directory. I needed the bills in my name for tax purposes but I wanted my lover's name to be listed. Tough. And of course, should we live apart in the future, one of us will have lost the benefit of being a previous subscriber, which means more money and more hassle when it comes to arranging a line.

We hardened our hearts. We ignored the flurry of 'Mr' and 'Dear Sir' responses from the House and Contents people. (My fault, I suppose, since I always sign myself J. Winterson with no sex indication. Asking about insurance is clearly a manly thing to do.) We ignored the 'Mrs' from the Gas Board (sorting out a gas account must be a woman's job). When a voice on the entry phone asked for the 'lady of the house', we both went downstairs. She bought a bottle of Windowlene and I bought some bin bags. Then we settled down to the serious business of dividing the household tasks.

This could not be a matter of simple preference. If we'd chosen according to that, I would have pottered about being practical and my lover could have ignored the perils of dangling outside a third floor window, getting it clean and herself terrified. Clearly, though, some jobs are butch and others are femme and, since neither of us wanted to live in a Radclyffe Hall paradise, we divided each category equally.

Butch jobs are: emptying the rubbish, cleaning the outside of the windows, fetching the coal, drying the dishes, dealing with fixtures, fittings and Jehovah's Witnesses.

Femme jobs are: the cat litter, cleaning the inside of the windows, washing up, ironing, choosing the curtains, scrubbing the bath and putting money in the Salvation Army envelopes.

Cooking, hoovering and the garden could, we felt, be shared without fear.

There was a crisis one morning when two of the radiators needed bleeding and my lover was out. Should I do both of them myself, or leave one for her?

However we sort it out at home — and, by and large, we do — there's still the world outside to push against. We were folding our double sheets in the launderette when the attendant made some chatty remark about how she hoped he'd appreciate them. 'Who?' we said. 'Him at home,' she said. 'There's no him at home,' I said, 'these are for us and we think they're great.' I've had trouble getting my 20 pences ever since.

There are compensations; not least that there's no 'him at home' and, particularly, because living with another woman is such a happy thing. I only wish the bank would recognise this and demand a software pack that didn't assume either marriage or one-party control. I looked up the word 'mortgage' in Dr Johnson's dictionary. He defines it as 'a dead pledge'. □

Weekend competition

No 2969 **Set by E.O. Parrott**

Contrary to our usual practice of goading you into pornography, we're going to ask you to clean the world up. For the Age of Aids, could we have re-writes — chaste, virginal, just-good-friendsish — of the more salacious passages from works such as *Fear of Flying, Lady Chatterley's Lover, Justine, The Canterbury Tales*, etc. Max. 150 words by 15 April.

No 2966 **Set by John Sweetman**

As Russia embarrasses the West into thawing towards it, political speeches denouncing some *new* World Threat.

Report **By Babe Bio**

So wot have you got against Iseland? If you arsk me, the Cod Wars have had more effect on this nashon's subconshers than anyone's reelised as yet. Too out of three of you — panicked at the thort of no mor fish fingers for supper — reely had it in for Reykjavik. Still, a wicked lot of entrys by and large: £12 a head to the winners.

No, my friends. For too long we have looked to the East in fear, ignoring the viper in our bosom. I am speaking of a country where secrecy is a way of life; a country which professes peace, but where every subject is trained and ready in the use of weapons of destruction; a country which has silently gathered to itself control of the private wealth of the Western World and, in the process, garnered information on prominent individuals such as the KGB or CIA could only dream of. I am speaking, my friends, of Switzerland.

Do not be fooled by the carefully nurtured images of cow bells and cuckoo clocks. Behind the granite facades of Zurich sit the men in steel-rimmed spectacles. From their icy fastness they could dominate the Europe they have carefully kept at arm's length. Neutral they may be, but *whose side are they on?*

NOEL PETTY

My friends, you've heard of Gallant Little Belgium, haven't you? Yes, Gallant Little Belgium, for whose sake we entered a destructive war. Do you know how many British corpses lie on Belgian soil?

But that wasn't enough. No. After two wars in which Britain, at the cost of her blood and treasure, pulled Belgian chestnuts out of the fire, what do we find? Not Gallant Little Belgium. Not humble little Belgium. No. We find established in Brussels an all-powerful bureaucracy. No longer is our parliament sovereign. No longer can we look on Belgium with pity and condescension.

A clever plan, is it not? To invoke the aid of a great power and, by that appeal, to bring the great power low. Then to plant agents, traitors, who in the guise of English statesmen will follow the bidding of their Belgian masters, leading us into Europe. It is time, my friends, that we opened our eyes. For unless we are vigilant, our children will all speak Flemish.

BASIL RANSOME-DAVIES

As we turn to face our Russian comrades with new warmth and friendliness, let us not forget the enemy breathing down our necks, ready to stab us in the back.

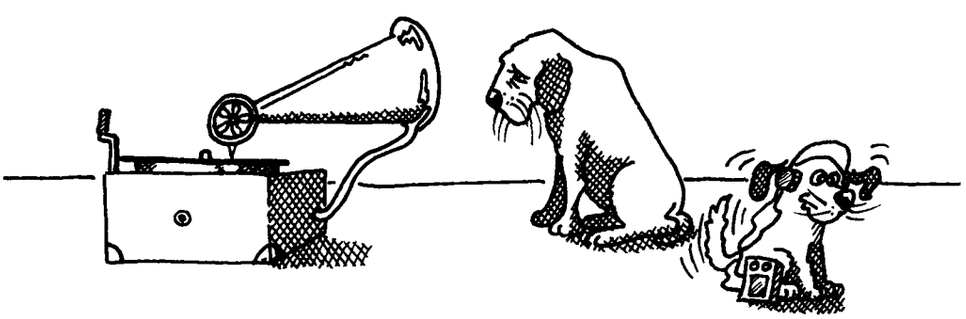
Iceland may not be renowned for its technology in warfare, but the country has vast natural resources of thermal energy — lethal fire to rain on those that displease her. And it is evident from past incidents that her leaders are not afraid to take action. Remember the cod wars? The scandalous interference with our fishing fleet, the gunfire? In more recent times, note that country's cold tardiness in affording help to our ships in trouble.

As innocuous as Magnus Magnusson may appear, he is not a true representative of these hard, calculating people, these errant Vikings. We must ask ourselves, can we really trust any nation which deludes itself that no television on Thursday is beneficial?

KATIE MALLETT

. . . here then is a country both topographically and politically impenetrable, yet one which is cunningly positioned so as to spy on our American allies. It is a country for which the term 'the cold war' can have no meaning. These ex-colonial Nanooks, these North Atlantic night-owls, have set their Arctic faces against the civilised world long enough. It is a commonplace to fear meeting a stranger at midnight. The world had better beware these topsy-turvy timekeepers then, in their sunless delirium. Is it not natural that these Viking upstarts, having loosened their ties with the Denmark we respect — a land of butter and bacon — that they will return to ravage and pillage as they did in Alfred's day? And more sinister still is that unresolved question lurking in the frontal lobes of every Englishman, a question to which perhaps only Greenland can give its icy answer: *what happened to the Titanic?*

WILL BELLENGER



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Marx Today
Ralph Edney
WE NEED SOME HIGH-STREET RESPONSES TO GLASNOST
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THE LIFT'S BROKEN
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WHA'APPEN?
HALLO PEDESTRIAN!
GLASS NOSE? THEY'RE A HEAVY MENTAL THRASH ROCK OUTFIT AIN'T THEY?
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BUT IN RUSSIA THERE AREN'T ANY GAYS — ONLY HOMOSEXUALS
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NOTHING — EXCEPT GORBACHEV DOESN'T KNOW IT YET
WHO'S DUBCEK?
Is Marx any nearer understanding the inevitable kulaks of communism? What is his opinion of polls?

Chess

ANY ACCOUNT of what you need to succeed in modern tournament chess will have to place good opening preparation high on the list of requisites. A memory for variations certainly helps, but that isn't all there is to it. Recent play in the Winawer variations of the French Defence will help to illustrate how opening theory evolves — and, I hope, leave us better equipped to meet 1. e4.

The variation in question opens **1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. e5 c5 5. a3 Bxc3 + 6. bxc3 Ne7 7. Nf3**. This line was looking very healthy for Black thanks to an idea that Korchnoi introduced 10 years ago: **7 . . . Qa5 8. Bd2 Nbc6 9. a4 Bd7 10. Be2 f6!**. Black immediately starts a counter-action in the centre and prevents White from expanding on the K-side with Ng5 followed by f4. One of the most important variations to note was given by Timman in his analysis of the 4th game of the 1977 Spassky-Korchnoi match: **11. c4 Qc7 12. exf6 gxf6 13. cxd5 Nxd5 14. c3 0-0-0 15. 0-0 Rhg8 16. Re1 e5 17. c4 Bh3 18. Bf1 Nf4!** Korchnoi played 18 . . . Nb6 and only drew. **19. Bxf4 exf4 20. d5 Bg4** and Black gets an untouchable Knight on d4.

The general idea behind Korchnoi's **10 . . . f6** was to castle Q-side and go for active play in the centre and down the g-file. This worked well because of White's sluggish development. White players drew the moral that they should defer a3-a4, which might be positionally desirable, but was non-developing. This did indeed make a difference. After **9. Be2 Bd7 10. 0-0 f6** White continues. **11. c4 Qc7 12. exf6 gxf6 13. cxd5 Nxd5 14. c4 Nde7 15. Bc3** and can be happy with his position — the 2 Bishops are starting to show and Black has to do something about his weakness on f6.

So the ball had now been lobbed back into Black's court. Was it possible to find some way of exploiting the omission of 9. a4? This is where the Cuban GM Nogueiras came up with one of the most important innovations of 1986: **9. Be2 cxd4! 10. cxd4 Qa4!** It looks strange at first to eliminate White's doubled c-pawns, but Black has in mind a clear-cut strategy to take advantage of White's Q-side weaknesses. He is aiming to exchange light-squared Bishops and then occupy the outpost at c4, e.g.:

Hazai-Nogueiras, Szirak 1986: 11. Bc3 b6! 12. Qd3 a5 13. 0-0 Ba6 14. Qd2 Bxe2 15. Qxe2 Qc4.

Sokolov-Yusupov, Riga 1986 (game 11): 11. Be3 b6! 12. Qd3 Na5 I prefer the more thematic 12 . . . a5. **13. Nd2 Bd7 14. 0-0 Rc8 15. Rfc1 0-0 16. Rab1 Nc4**. In both cases Black had a definite positional advantage. Now, if only we could find an equally bright idea against **3. Nd2!**

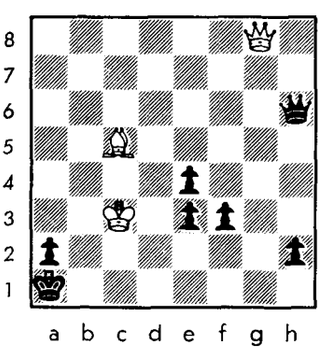
April 4 is Lajos Portisch's 50th birthday. Throughout his distinguished career the Hungarian GM has always been renowned for his careful preparation. But perhaps Portisch can be caught out if you play something too unusual to be included in his homework?

Portisch-Miles, Tilburg 1986.

1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 e6 3. c4 a6!? Having beaten Karpov with 1 . . . a6, Tony is fully entitled to try 3 . . . a6 against Portisch! **4. Nc3 c5 5. d5 b5 6. Bg5 b4 7. Ne4 d6 8. g3 Ra7 9. Bg2 e5** White needs to find something here, otherwise Black will have got away with stealing quite a lot of space. Yet doubling Black's pawns with Bxf6 does not seem to accomplish anything, as White does not control the blockading square f5. Portisch comes up with a striking solution that proves that Black's pawns have outstepped their logistical support. **10. a3! bxa3 11. b4! cxb4 12. Bxf6 gxf6 13. Qa4 + Nd7 14. Qxb4 f5 15. Nxd6 + Bxd6 16. Qxd6 Qa5 + 17. Kf1 Rb7** With the sneaky threat of 18 . . . Qc3 19. Qxa3 Rb1 + . But this is easily parried and Black is leftwith nothing but weak pawns and uncoordinated pieces. 17 . . . Qc5 18. Qxc5 Nxc5 19. Rxa3 Rb7 offers more chances. **18. Bh3 e4 19. Nh4 Rb6 20. Qf4 Qc3 21. Kg2 1-0**. Perhaps a little early to throw in the towel, but Black's position is a complete shambles.

Problem

Pervakov, 1985: White to play and win. I had to look the solution up when I spotted this difficult study in Kuznetsov's column in *Shakmatny Bulletin*, so I'm inclined to be helpful. The main theme is a battery in the a1-h8 diagonal. The fun begins with **1. Bd4! Qb6! 2. Bxb6 h1 = Q 3. Bd4 Qd1** — and now what?



Solution to the study by Ryabinin and Hait given last week [8/6k1/3N2P1/5K2/8p5p1/r5B1/8]: **1. Ne8 + Kh6 2. g7 Rf2 + 3. Kg4 Rf6! 4. Be4! Rg6 +** Or 4 . . . g2 5. g8 = N mate. **5. Bxg6 g2 6. Kf5 g1 = Q 7. g8 + N mate.**

George Botterill

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☐ Mr Amery also dismissed Labour charges that the government did not care about unemployment. 'It is ridiculous, in an election year, to suggest we don't care about unemployment. We want to be elected, so of course we care about unemployment.' — *Independent* (H. Lintott)

☐ A Second World War prison camp which housed Italians and Germans at Old Malton, N. Yorks. opens as a tourist attraction today. It features barbed wire, singing Italian waiters and garlic smells, and visitors can pay to sleep in huts inside the compound. — *Financial Times* (P. O'R. Smiley)

☐ A colleague spotted a sign outside a second-hand shop in Mitcham, South London which said: 'We buy rubbish; we sell antiques.' — *Daily Telegraph* (George Moor)

☐ Mr Keith Stewart, 25, a prison officer held hostage at Saughton jail, Edinburgh, last October is to be paid overtime for the 87 hours he was detained by five prisoners on the roof. — *Daily Telegraph* (Gregory Tesser)

☐ An unnamed 25-year-old man who rode for 50 miles on the buffers between two carriages of an 80 mph Exeter-Waterloo express train on Saturday is expected to be charged for travelling without a ticket — *Daily Telegraph* (J. J. Prestridge)

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